



Rough Rider

Poems

BY JOHN ALLEN

JOHN ALLEN



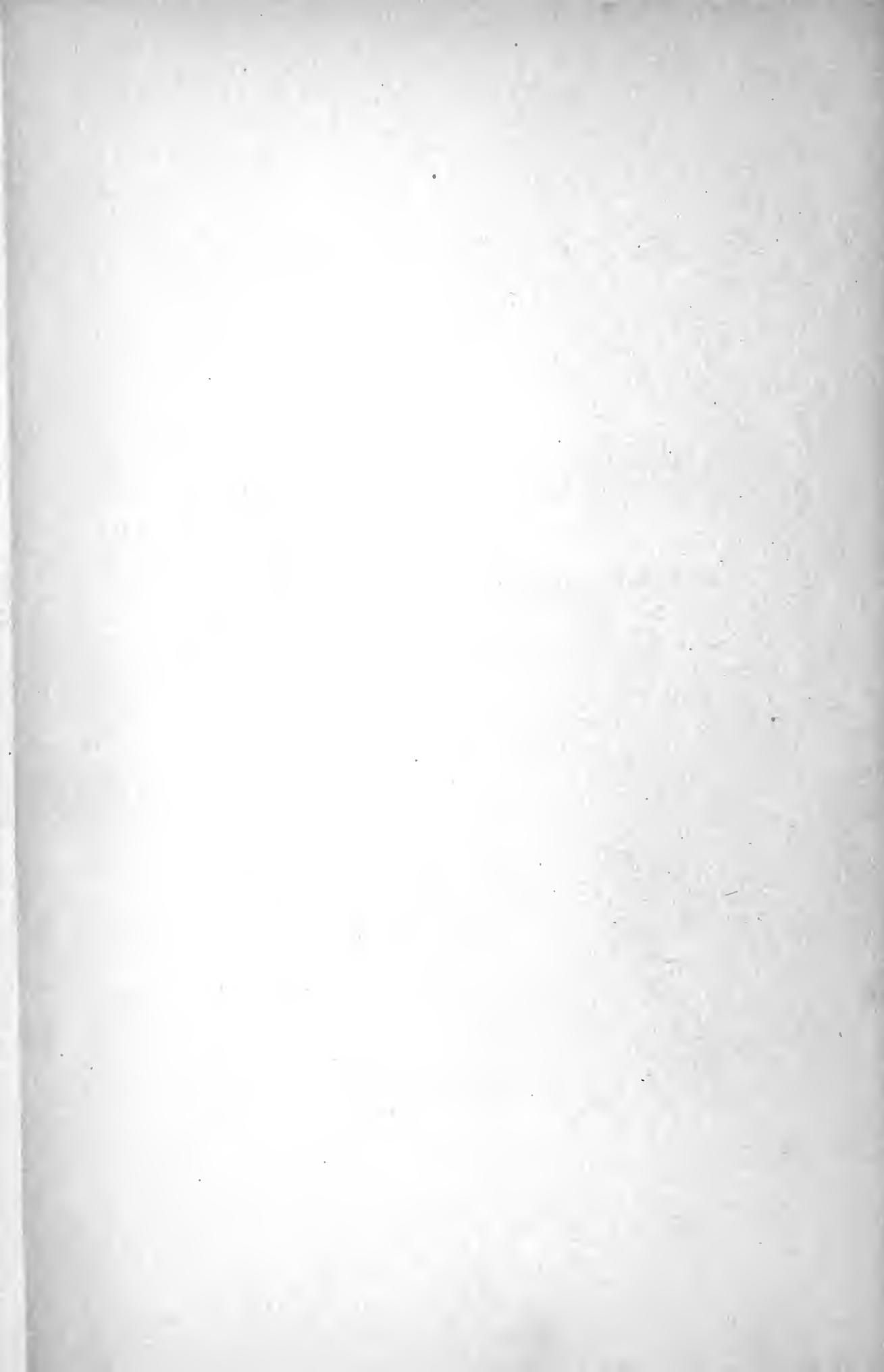
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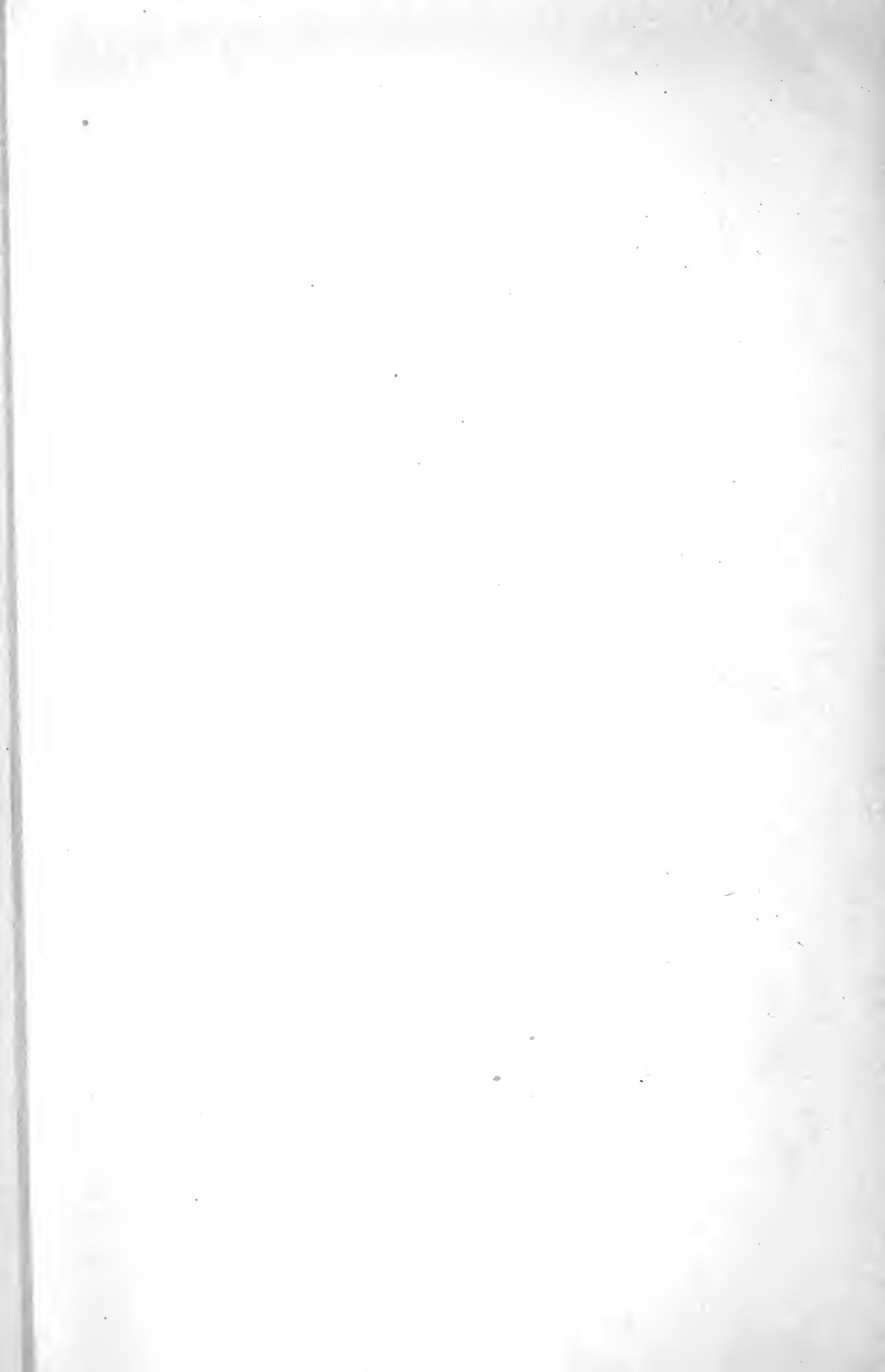
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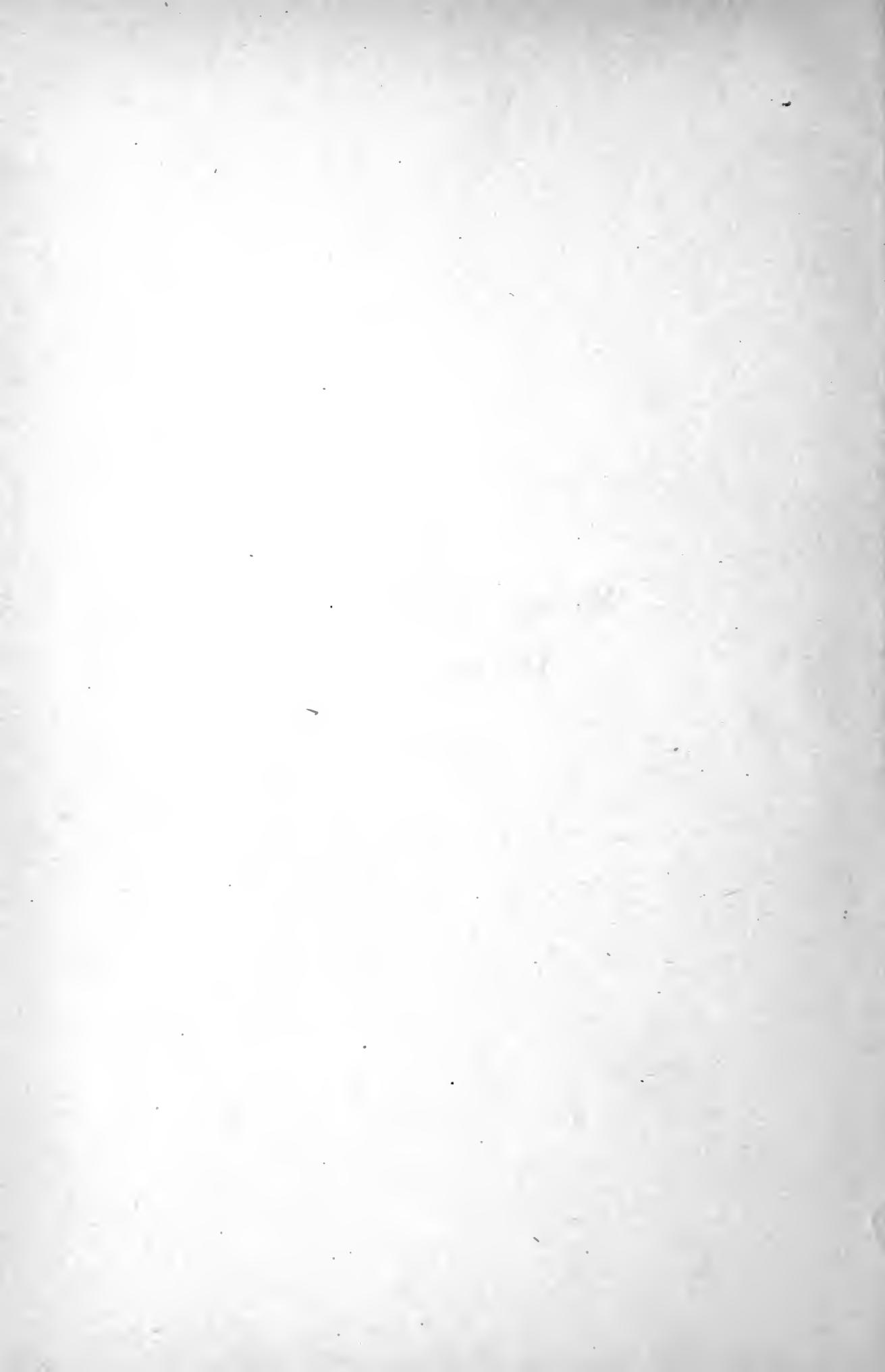




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Poems

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- By -

JOHN ALLEN



CHARLES W. BANCROFT CO.
CHICAGO

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JOHN ALLEN

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DAVY CROCKET'S RIDE

*Say, Stranger, now ain't it a while between drinks?
Ye see, 'bout old Thunder I've so many kinks
I'd set here forever ter tell what he's done;
There ain't any equal ter him, not a one!*

Davy Crocket's Ride

"You sort of admire that small mustang's pints?
Why, stranger, there's lightnin' in all them rough jints!
That's why his name's Thunder. I gave it to him,
Tho' when I first owned him his name was plain Jim.
Set by for a minute; that's Rosebud, my wife—
Thar' ain't any finer gal 'round, on yer life;
Thar' ain't any sweeter in all the wide West,
I pan out on her, let who will have the rest!
You think she's a woman; I say she's a Saint,
An Angel of goodness, I'm blest ef she ain't!
But speakin' of horses. Whoa! easy now, Thunder.
Look out! he might nip ye, and I shouldn't wonder;
Ye see, he knows me, but to strangers he's shy.
Just look at that devil's light in his off eye!
'Twas this way: one day at sun up we sped
Far out on the prairie, red hot over head;
There wasn't a cloud in the bright copper sky,
And water—there wasn't a drop of it nigh,
Not even a sign of it, look where you might,
And nothin' but parched, withered sage brush in sight.
Why even the tongues of the coyotes hung out

A half a yard long as they skulked 'round about.
I own I was puzzled to know whar to go—
To know what to do tho' I'm not always so.
'Well, Thunder,' sez I, 'it's a clear case of skunk.'
He snorted, as much as to say—'We'll git hunk!'
Then just over thar rose a small cloud of dust,
I couldn't make out what it meant, at the fust,
But Thunder there pricked up his ears, shook his head,
And 'Injuns! run fer it!' that's just what he said.
Right off to our left was a small clump of trees,
We started fur that; it was go as you please;
But I knew we could hide, if we got there in time,
And the way Thunder galloped—well, it was sublime!
I just let him have that bit all to the good,
And yelled 'Go it Thunder!' and he understood!
The red devils swept down, with one mighty yell,
I fired at the foremost, his horse reared, he fell!
A shower of bullets clipped brush all around,
But on galloped Thunder—kept time to the sound!
Still nearer and nearer, to head us they tried,
Old Thunder kept going, and never once shied
Until we were safe behind that clump of trees,
And Thunder—why, that for him wasn't a breeze!

But this wasn't all, for I caught just a gleam,
Although miles away, and I knew 'twas a stream,
And that was the brightest of visions to me,
A sight much more precious than any could be!
Say, Stranger, do you know the awful sensation
Of thirst, hev ye given it consideration?
The sky like an oven, the sand 'neath yer feet,
And even the rattle snakes frizzling with heat;
Yer tongue lolling out, and yer lips baked and hard.
Well, say, if yer haven't, yer lucky, old pard.
As I was just sayin,' he saved me, old Thunder,
So look at him, tell me now, ain't he a wonder?
But that wasn't all, fer we've had other chases
Which showed Thunder's mettle and elegant paces.
Just pass the old bottle, it makes me feel dry
To think of the times we've had, Thunder and I.
One night when the stars were all twinkling aloft,
And breezes were hummin' not any too soft,
We two had been prospectin' nigh the foot hills,
And hungry enough, well, to give one the chills.
When all of a sudden the heavens grew clouded
A snow-storm was risin', the prospect was shrouded
With big flakes of snow till our sight it was blinded,

We'd soon lost the trail; but old Thunder ne'er minded.
He stood still awhile as if thinking about it,
Then made up his mind that he could do without it
And find out a path for himself.

Now 'twas midnight

The snow kept on falling, and totally hid night;
But Thunder, fleet footed just kept up his stride
And I was so frozen, I scarcely could ride.

An hour went by, and we no nigher home,
The desert was white, like an ocean of foam;
I heard a low sound, and the old horse looked back
To see what it was that had followed his track;
I knew it was WOLVES, and, my God, what a pack!
On, faster and faster, they came with a rush!
It made my blood curdle to hear in that hush
Of snow-blinding midnight the horrible howl
Of hundreds of wolves with their fierce hungry growl!
Old Thunder he knew how to spoil their nice game,
He'd been thar before, and their mettle could tame;
I stood in my stirrups, and held tight my breath,
(To be eaten alive ain't a nice kind of death!)
As the foremost black speck shown out clear on the white
Of the snow, I let loose, and ONE stopped in his flight!

Bang! Bang! You'd have thought that all hell was to pay,
And so for a minute I held them at bay.
To see them black devils, when they'd scented blood,
Tear, scramble and scratch would hev' done yer heart
good.

Old Thunder swept on, didn't lose nary inch—
A friend is yer friend when it comes to a pinch!
And he was my friend on that terrible night,
I'll never forget it—not by a dern sight!
Them wolves put together, stopped havin' their fight,
We hurried along, and they fast strugglin' after,
And all the while makin' their horrible laughter,
Which seemed to say, 'now we'll soon hev' ye dead beat,
And dollars to doughnuts you both are our meat!'
But look! at the foot-hills a half mile away
There twinkles a light! 'Tis as welcome as day
To one who despairs thro' a night of disaster!
I'm blessed if old Thunder then didn't run faster,
And up to the door of my cabin he stopped,
While out of the saddle I instantly dropped
And led him straight in, when I barred quick the door
Those daring black devils we'd foiled just once more!
Say, Stranger, now ain't it a while between drinks?

Ye see, 'bout old Thunder I've so many kinks
I'd set here forever ter tell what he's done;
There ain't any equal ter him, not a one!

Well, there was a gal, just a rose-bud of June,
She set my heart singin' to love's sweetest tune,
Yer never might think it; but 'twas years ago,
And somehow time changes a feller, ye know,
But never the HEART—she's my love to this hour,
And blooms still for me, my dear rose-bud, my flow'r!

Another chap liked her, she didn't let on
Which lover her mind had yet settled upon.

So somehow that chap said we'd RACE for her hand,
Whoever should win she would choose—understand?

Well, he was a tenderfoot, always would brag
About his fine Morgan-sired thoroughbred nag.

And I had old Thunder, or rather plain Jim—
For that was the name was first given to him.

The race-day came off; there was lots of a crowd,
The talk and the bettin' was both rather loud.

A hundred to one was the odds on my nag,
But that didn't matter, and I didn't care,
For I saw a face that looked heavenly fair,
Her eyes seemed to say, 'I am yours, and you'll win!'

Although to the rest my chance looked rather thin.
Four miles straight away and return, was the game,
His horse looked the winner, mine humble and tame.
We started, the crowd roared, he'll beat him to death,
But me and old Thunder there just held our breath.
In racin' ye know, it's a good thing ter wait
And shout when yer win, this you'll learn soon or late!
The FIRST mile he went away far in the lead,
But I didn't mind that, I knew Thunder's speed,
Just hung on until we had come to the TWO
And then just a leetle up nearer I drew.
The THIRD, 'bout the same, and I saw Thunder wink
As much as to say, 'We hev' got him, I think!'
The FOURTH, goin' easy, as usual quite,
And then came the run home—well that was a sight!
The FIFTH, we had crept up still nearer, could see
That Morgan-sired thoroughbred didn't agree
With the lashing his rider applied to his flank.
I knew in a twinkling his courage then sank,
And old Thunder's hoof-beats—they flew like a dart—
Kept always repeating, 'Oh, we'll break his heart!'
'Oh, we'll break his heart!' then the SIXTH mile we
passed,

And up to his saddle, swept Thunder, at last!
He hung there as never a nag hung before!
Then up to the skies went a yell and a roar,
As the SEVENTH we passed, half an inch to the fore!
The thoroughbred rallied, came at us again,
His rider plied spur, till he bled from each vein,
But it was nary use, and the string was in sight,
And Thunder swept on, in his masterly might,
Won the race in a canter, and just by pure grit,
And, Stranger, well, that is about all of it!
Except that I won the gal settin' up there
And smilin, a pretty rose-bud in her hair,
Which she took and pinned on my coat right away,
And she's been my ROSE-BUD since that very day!

OSCEOLA

*What nobler monument
Should be than his whose stolen lands
Divided were by white man's hands?
Whose kin were severed from his heart,
Whose wife was sold at Slavery's mart?
Conquered in the unequal fight
Where bullets dared the arrows' flight,
He looms, heroic and sublime
A noble warrior thro' all time!*

Osceola

Here, beside the deep blue sea,
I muse of days no more to be
Of Life and all its tangled skein,
Its mingled joy and bitter pain.

The white sails dot the pearl tipped waves
That sob and moan as o'er the graves
Of sailors in eternal sleep
Down in the caves of ocean deep !

So moans my heart beside the sea
For one brave heart who once to me
Seemed god-like in his majesty !

Whose image now before me comes,
Aye, god-like still !

I hear the drums
Of yonder surf beat on the shore.
Again I'm with the hearts of yore !
My father was a trader brave
And led me hither as a boy,
By dark ravine and rocky cave
And swamp ; and here it was my joy
To gaze on Osceola's face

With every line of manhood's grace
Written thereon, as on a page!
Oh, bravery was the heritage
Of this great Chief, e'en then my friend,
And true and loyal to the end!
He drew me to him as a star
Draws mortal gaze to heaven afar.
My young soul in its ardor grew
To love his band; their ways I knew.
Here where the swarthy negroes bold,
Never to be in slavery sold,
As was their doom in days of old,
Ere they became brave refugees;
Only to him they bent the knees—
Their Chief!

Here were the red men true,
Stolid and brave to dare and do;
These were the mighty ones I knew
In those young days of long ago.
And their foe was my deadly foe!
For Osceola drew free breath,
And slavery was living Death!

My heart, my sympathy I gave
Unto the mighty Chief so brave.
His eagle eyes oft looked in mine ;
Stalwart was he as forest pine ;
He led us thro' the dense morass,
'Mid tangled woods and waving grass,
And garlanded, the foe we chased,
Relentlessly as blood hounds track
Their quarry, and ne'er turned we back !
Beneath the swaying palms we rode
Whose leaves like daggers hung ;
And under fruit of gold we strode,
While battle songs were sung.
Birds of blue and green and red
Hovered o'er each feathered head
For the fierce war-path bonnetted
'Mid sylvan haunts where fruit was pressed,
Like children to the mother-breast ;
Where the deer, startled from his rest,
Sped like an arrow from the bow,
And the bear wandered to and fro,
At blush of dawn our steps would go ;
Living the life that Freedom knows—

Its energy—its grand repose!
Our weapons were the arrows keen
The bow, the knife, the tomahawk;
Not for wild creatures of the scene
That thro' the everglades would stalk;
“These were for Tyrants only made—”
These weapons borne thro' everglade
And gorgeous vines, upon our trail:
So said our Chief. As summer gale,
His words were soft. His heart was kind
As maiden's in its peace enshrined!
As gentle as the bronze-eyed fawn
That crops the herbage of the dawn!

We halted by the streams
That sang, as if in dreams;
Where fair magnolias grew
And winds their fragrance blew.
The campfire's smoke upcurled,
Like sails that were unfurled.

Then would the great Chief walk apart,
And muse beside the babbling stream,
Or gaze upon the far-off stars
That trembled in the majesty
Of God!

'Twas there I sought him once,
And there he told me of his wrongs.
His beauteous bride had in her veins
The blood that doomed her for a slave !
How she was taken, to be sold
As beast of burden, in those days !
How he had pled for her release,
And how the scoff and bitter jibe
Of pale faces had wrung his heart
To deadly vengeance. "I fight them not,"
He said, "because the face is white ;
It is because the heart is black !
With treachery deep-dyed their soul !
I war for Freedom of all men !
So shall I till Life's sun departs."

Again at dawn the trail we took,
By moss-hung trees, and winding brook ;
Green, tangled depths, where wild birds piped
And nimble squirrels, brownly striped,
Like bolts of lightning, flashed in air,
And hid in trees all sunlit fair.

Then rang the war whoop piercing wild ;
The rifle cracked ; and knives out-flashed ;
Blood reddened every inch of sod ;
Dripped at our belts the pale face scalps !
The wild flight to our swamps, at dusk,
And we secure from hand of foe !
The battle raged, day after day,
Then came a lull.

Where we were hid

Gay butterflies, with wavering wings,
Poised on the air, like flying flowers ;
The mocking bird its song outpoured
In thankfulness to bounteous God !
But rest was brief ; the stern command
Of Osceola rang once more,
And on the war-path sped his band
To victory.

So fell my lot,
One day, to linger in the camp,
Bade by my Chief to watch and guard.
Idly I lay 'neath tropic skies.
There, bathed in sunset's radiant gold,
Before me stood an Indian girl,
Dark-eyed, and lovely as a queen!
My heart was hers, e'en while I gazed!
The daughter of a Chief was she—
A mighty Chief—with heart of stone!
And he would have his daughter wed
A slave-trader, with many wives—
Fair sample of the hideous trade!
A harem had he 'mid these wilds
Of dusky hued, and black and white!
We wandered on thro' blossoming trees,
Where humming bees and warbling birds
Made musical the canopies
Of leaves above, where glinted thro'
The deep blue of the skies of Heaven,
And spoke we then of Love!

True love.

That fills the heart with sweetest bliss!

The hope, the joy of all desire,
A balm, and a consuming flame!
We drifted in our bark canoe
'Neath drooping palms, where lilies bloomed,
Not whiter, fairer, than her soul!
Thro' fragrant breath of orange groves
We glided; saw the stars arise
And set; and sang she there for me
A song; like cooing of the dove
Unto its mate: no song more sweet
Was ever heard in Paradise!
Alas, but happiness is brief,
And Love—a flower that fades at eve!

What strange canoes swung into sight?
What rifles gleamed in hands of might?
Bound were we there, and led away
Unto a city old and gray!
They placed me in a noisome cell
Wherein no gleam of daylight fell—
Rock-hewn, in Spanish days of old.
Chilly, and hung with slimy mould.
I moaned, I cried in my despair,

Like pinioned leopard in its lair!
I cursed my lot, with bitter tears—
The echo was but savage jeers!
A keeper came, thrust thro' a door
Bread, water; then locked, as before
That egress—all was dark once more!
One night as I bemoaned my Fate,
Left hopeless, dying, desolate,
I heard the jailer's jingling keys;
A trembling smote my hands, my knees;
But 'twas the thrill of wild delight!
In buckskin garbed, dawned on my sight
My loved one!

In each other's arms,
What cared we then for all the harms
That vengeance sought on us to wreak?
“What do you here, my darling—speak?”
I whispered, “I have come to save
My true love from his living grave!”
She answered, “Doomed to torture dire—
The horrid rack, the deadly fire,
This was your portion!

I am here

Oh, my beloved, do not fear!
And I remain to take your place!
Nay, look not so, with ashen face!
Horses are near; go, dearest, go!"
She said, with cheeks of love aglow.
"What does this mean?" my heart outspoke;
But swifter than the lightning's stroke
Fell on my ears her words of dread:
"It means, you rescued from the dead
A soul that sinned forevermore,
And from perdition did restore
A lone, despairing, worthless one
Shunned by all good beneath the sun!
No purity was in my heart
Till love of yours came to impart
Its healing balm; as lilies are,
In whiteness, you have made my soul
So it may seek its envied goal—
The happy hunting grounds; for when
Your lips touched mine, ah, then, ah, then,
Love made of me—the vulture foul—
In search of prey, a dove!

Fiends prowl
To seek your death!
Go! Leave me! Go!"

"Then let us both escape," I said,
She shook her head, and answered, "No!"
Recoiling from my arms in dread.
"I am not fit to share your love,
Tho' dear it is as Heaven above!
To-day I was to have been wed,"
And in her shame she bowed her head.
"The hardened sinner here would rest;
I die for you—it is the best!
That Fate alone for me is blest!
I hear their footsteps! Go, love, fly!"
"And leave you here alone? Not I!"
I spoke, and caught her to my heart,
"No! you and I shall never part!"
She drew a dagger from her girth,
I dashed it swiftly to the earth!
The door flew open; swift as light
A steed I mounted, in my flight,
And lifted her unto my side,
As o'er the trail, quick, bound on bound,
We sped!

Click ! came the fateful sound
Of rifle !

With its deadly aim :

A spurt from her breast came,
And silent in my arms she lay !

* * * *

On, on, with the speed of a cyclone, my bay
Dashed into the open, away and away !
With one arm I held my dear burden, so pale,
But words that I spoke there could nothing avail.

By river and ford,
By hill and ravine ;
Past forests so broad
Of dew-spangled green ;
'Neath tall, bearded trees
Moss-tangled, we flew ;
With Death on the breeze—
Yet no rein I drew !
Crack ! Crack ! rifles blazed,
Swift bullets sang 'round ;
Still forward I gazed
Nor heeded their sound.
I called her dear name !

I pleaded that she
Would speak! Pressed her cheek,
Ah! how cold 'twas to me!
My wild, panting steed
Paused no whit in his flight;
But each word he would heed.
Was there rescue in sight?
Thro' the river we splashed,
Up the steep bank we dashed;
And at the dying of the day
As rescue, safety, far away,
Was almost in my startled grasp!
I felt her hand's convulsive clasp.
Then all was still!

I knew no more,
Until a grave face bending o'er
My form, recalled me back to light
And Life!

And he who met my sight
Was Osceola, Chief and friend!
And so my story has its end.

* * * *

We made her grave beneath the pines,
Where evermore the lily twines
In loving friendship with the rose,
And swift winds sigh at day's repose.
I pressed her lips ere in that tomb
I left her in her beauty's bloom!
And ever after, in sweet dreams,
I've heard her voice—so near it seems!
Her light canoe glides swiftly by
At twilight, 'neath that tropic sky,
And on the air her song is heard
Mingled with night-songs of the bird.
Years afterwards I sought the spot
Where she was laid, but found it not;
But the light leaves that warm winds stir,
Seemed ever whispering of her!
I felt her breath upon my cheek,
Her eyes beamed on me, softly meek!
Away! it was the dream of yore
Those Seminole days live no more,
And all their joys and griefs are o'er!

But Osceola, what of him?
The well-fought battle sounds grew dim.
They led my Chief in chains away—
His spirit broken—from the fray;
That spirit proud had never bent
Before!

What nobler monument
Should be than his whose stolen lands
Divided were by white man's hands?
Whose kin were severed from his heart,
Whose wife was sold at Slavery's mart?
Conquered in the unequal fight
Where bullets dared the arrows' flight,
He looms, heroic and sublime,
A noble warrior thro' all time!

O, glorious Nation that with might
Hath trodden down the Indian's Right!
Hath sown your vices in his path!
Will there not come a day of wrath
When all shall surely righted be!
Take heed lest this dark day you see,
When the red man, in God's own time,
Shall rise in judgment in your crime!

Florida, 1880.

THE WATCHERS OF THE TRAIL

*What city of that long forgotten past
Here built its homes, and braved the furnace-blast?
What loves, what hopes, here had their glorious birth,
And lived their hours upon this spot of earth?*

The Watchers of the Trail

(Arizona.)

High o'er the desert's leagues of bleaching sand
That seems to quiver in the blinding glare,
No blade of living green on either hand,
With only desolation in the air,
And silence, breathing Death and grim Despair,
With helpless horror brooding everywhere
The spirit of the scene—a grizzly stands
Upon a peak whose eminence commands
The utmost limit of these lonely lands.
Above him rise still grander heights of snow,
Up, up, until they lose themselves in clouds;
While gorge and ravine yawning far below,
Whose awful deeps the darkest shadow shrouds,
Unlighted by the sunset's dying glow,
A sense of fearful majesty bestow.
Rich purple, fit for panoply of kings,
The setting orb illimitably flings
O'er purest white of snows for ages laid
Far, far above the towering pine-tree glade,
And mingled hues of pearl and amethyst

50 THE WATCHERS OF THE TRAIL.

Blend o'er the scene in gold and purple mist!
As if the hand of God, at shut of day,
Were softly laid upon His glorious work,
That it might hide from awe-pierced eyes away
Yon desert where dark, fell Destruction lay!
The arrows of the sunset, tipped with fire,
Glanced over gorge and over rocky spire,
For like some vast Cathedral's massive height
The grand Sierras loom upon the sight
This sunset hour; and thro' their cloven aisles,
Lo! 'tis Almighty God who sweetly smiles!
The wind's soft sigh is like the prelude fair
Of some vast organ calling man to prayer!
And deeper, deeper flash the radiant dyes
Of those translucent, iridescent skies
Till Heaven seems opened to the raptured gaze
And human hearts pause in devout amaze!
The spirit of the scene stood silent there,
Distinctly limned against this scene so fair,
Huge, fierce, as if to supreme anger wrought
At what the years in onward course had brought.
He seemed to mark the desert's deadly waste;
The mountains wild in adamant encased;

The snowy peaks ; the weird abyss beneath ;
The river, like a sword without a sheath,
Glancing afar ; the pine trees darkly green—
All these he marked—the spirit of the scene—
Then to my heart, in accents eloquent,
A message from that dizzy height was sent,
And with the glory of the scene was blent
In never fading, and resistless power,
From him—the Prophet of the sunset hour !
From him whose feet had trodden year by year
Yon valleys low, and yon aerial sphere
Whose only limit is the keen-eyed stars
Which sentinel the realm that Heaven bars
From mortal ken ! And thus the message sped :
“These paths by man untrodden, wild and lone,
The lapse of Ages, since earth’s dawn, have known !
Yon silvery river murmuring to the sea
Will ripple on till Time no more shall be ;
These caverns held in hollow of God’s hand
Will rear their heads precipitately grand
And frown o’er yonder parching desert sand ;
While storms of Winter turbulent and free
Will wolf-like howl in fierce and angry might,

Resounding still from awful height to height,
'Mid blinding whirls of sleet and feathery snow,
When icy winds tumultuously blow !

And man will pass away, aye, race by race,
No more on earth to have a biding place,
His bones will whiten yonder gleaming sands,
And all the labor of his busy hands
Will prove of no avail, howe'er he toil,
And garner, in his greed, the golden spoil
Of these wild lands ! Yet these forever last—
These battlements and towers grandly vast,
Forever soaring to the skies afar,
Above the world's incessant hum and jar,
A living monument of Deity supreme
To mock man's power, and scorn his wildest dream
Of grand achievement ! Yea, these pass not by
Till like a scroll shall rolled up be the sky
In flame and earthquake shock and gloom
Wild portents of the judgment day of Doom !

Time was, when o'er yon desert's mighty space,
The buffalo would darken Nature's face
In numbers countless as the ocean's waves
Or, as on earth, are mankind's mouldering graves !

As if the clouds that brought the hurricane
Had swept their vampire-wings across the plain
And hovered there! Where are those legions now
That thundered past the vales and hills, as proud
Of vessel plunges in the ocean's brine,
Or cleft-rock flies adown the steep decline?
Gone! Not one vestige of their bones remains
To speak their prowess on yon sterile plains!
Oft have I seen the canvas wagons thread
The path upon the dried-up river's bed—
Like tiny sails of white they sped along
And faintly on the breeze I heard the song
Of many a brave and stalwart settler-throng
Upon its way towards the boundless West,
While here I've listened on this lofty crest!
How oft I've watched the twinkling campfire's gleam,
Like fireflies, by the starry-lighted stream,
While o'er the tent the midnight hush descended
And all the toils of day in dreams were ended!
Where are those brave and sun-bronzed hearts of yore?
Go search the sands, you ne'er will find them more!
Lost, swallowed up by Time's devouring might—
Gone like the lightning's flash in depths of night

Unmarked, unnoticed in oblivion's flight !
Yet still this canon's deeps in shadow lie,
And still these rocks immeasurably high
Heed not the years in their incessant flow ;
Massive they stand as in ages long ago !
The golden arrows of the lightning strike ;
But bolt or sunbeam is to them alike ;
The rains and snows beat on them year by year,
But all unscathed their ancient forms appear,
As when they first in elemental strife
Sprang, at God's bidding, to insensate life !
Born of the earthquake's globe uprending shock,
Heaving stupendous rock high up on rock ;
Measureless chasm and abyss tremendous,
Down, shear down, where cataracts leap by ;
Gorge, gulch, declivity and walls stupendous,
Where never gleams the light of yonder sky !
Home of the eagle, and the vulture's haunt,
Where silently they poise on moveless wings !
Ah, vain is man and every idle vaunt
Of prowess than in vanity he sings
When measured with this handiwork of God—
Towers of the world, by human feet untrod !

Creation's dawn first saw this majesty
Of mountains sentinelling yonder vales—
First heard the grand and fearful symphony
Awaken in the fury of its gales,
And thunder down these vast cathedral aisles
Where never blossom in the sunlight smiles !
So far away that scarcely eye could scan
Like specks appeared the savage caravan,
Trailing the tepees o'er the arid waste,
Or spurring on in wild ferocious haste
To where the pioneers their tents had placed,
In fancied safety, for a night of rest
And peaceful dreams, where never ills molest,
Then on the dreamers beamed the home-light sweet
Whose cheerful rays their eyes no more would greet !
The home beside the river's flowery side
Before their vision stood in humble pride ;
The well-sweep and the barn were theirs once more,
And living faces and delights of yore.
As if the fiends of Hell had all arisen—
Had rushed headlong from out their lurid prison,
The painted foe upon the quarry swept,
And Death their portion was while calmly slept

56 THE WATCHERS OF THE TRAIL.

Mother and babe, and maidens in their glow,
And manhood, and old age with locks of snow !
Sphinx-like this mountain's face down-gazed
Impassive, stern, nor more amazed
Than if the sound of Angels' hovering wings
Had fallen there in grateful murmurings !
Or if the grand celestial choir had sung
In rapturous measure, past all mortal tongue
Or mind of human to conceive : so gazed
This mountain, pitiless and unamazed !
Noon on the desert's white and gleaming waste,
A copper sky whereon no cloud is traced ;
No glance of water glimmers to the sight,
No sound of bird or beast, from left to right,
Or anywhere, nothing save quivering blight !
The cactus rears its tiny spears ; no shade
For endless leagues along the trackless path
No longer swept by cyclone in its wrath,
That hurled the sleet-like sand in whirls of fire
Stinging the hapless traveler, like fire !
No breath of air to fan the swollen veins
That choked with blood stand out upon the skin
Of laboring broncho, on whose neck the reins

Hang loosely o'er his mane. Dejected, thin,
Devoured by thirst, his rider's anxious gaze
Scans, hand o'er eyes, the soul-tormenting blaze,
His black lips cracked, and red with spilted blood;
While in his feverish fancy pours a flood,
In tantalizing gushes, just afar
Where yonder mirage tells where green hills are!
The trail is lost! He staggers aimlessly,
For yonder oasis holds life and rest!
A few more steps and safety he can see,
And sweet repose upon fair Nature's breast!
He shouts as shouts the maniac in glee!
Another step, 'tis all, to reach yon tree
That waves its branches in the cooling air!
Still on and on his blundering footsteps fare,
For fast recedes that vision from his eyes
Beneath the fire that falleth from the skies
To wither 'neath its touch both man and beast,
And fit them for the vulture's watched-for feast!
Oh, God of Heaven, 'tis pitiful to lie
Out on the desert lone, and slowly die;
To seem to hear the babbling, silver brooks
Singing their way along in mossy nooks!

58 THE WATCHERS OF THE TRAIL.

To know that help is gone forevermore,
And all Life's purposes and plans are o'er!
Was this the end to be of search for gold?—
These wanderings and horrors manifold?
Ah, glazed eyes fixed upon the dome above,
Who now will close those lids with hands of love?
Who softly still those writhing limbs of thine?
Whose loving arms thy wasted form entwine?
E'en now, afar, mayhap some loved one waits
To welcome thee, the while she contemplates
Thy safe return to Home and all that's dear,
Within her heart no haunting thought of fear!
And, hopeless, watching, as year follows year,
Will say: "He has forgotten those he knew
In the old days, before he proved untrue!"
Meanwhile he lies upon the barren sands,
Stretched white upon his breast those bony hands!
His sepulchre the dim, lone desert's reach,
His requiem the eagle's rancous screech!
And yet God knows, and understands!
Back in the flight of Time, yea, eons back,
My spirit flies, and sees no vapid track;
But hordes that dwelt upon this flowerless land—

The men of old of stalwart limb
Whose eyes the sun-blaze could not dim.
What city of that long forgotten past
Here built its homes, and braved the furnace-blast?
What loves, what hopes, here had their glorious birth,
And lived their hours upon this spot of earth?
The songs of childhood, and the laugh of youth,
The words of wisdom and the voice of truth,
Here oft were heard beneath the swaying palm,
And golden hours were pass'd in joy and calm,
Where roses gave the fragrance of their balm
To winds that played 'mid tresses dark or fair;
And mirth was ringing on the wandering air!
Now every breath is laden with Despair!
No purposes that live in human heart
But in long ages back have played their part
Beneath this sky! Perchance here flowed the sea
In all its wild and peerless majesty!
And sails were wafted from their havens here
While songs of sailors rang with merry cheer
Long after cities had lain buried here!
What centuries of human woe and weal
Could not these mute and Time-swept sands reveal?

Peaks of the ancient world, we ask in vain!
Ye answer not unto our plea! Again
I turn me to the sphinx-like mountain's brow,
And in my helplessness I humbly bow!
Ye answer not, who all could now unfold,
Clad in soft raiment of the sunset's gold,
Crowned with the glory that surpasses kings
Beauty of star and moon; and all that brings
Loveliness to earth kneels at thy feet,
And offer thee the homage of the morn;
The grandeur of the tempest wreathes thee 'round,
The lightning's gold is that with which thou'rt crowned,
Thy jewels are the dew drops newly born!
Lo! still yon beast looks o'er the desert scene
Bathed in the sunset's beatific sheen—
Deep-woven dyes resplendently serene!
Dark painted there against yon background gray,
Illumined by each evanescent ray,
The Prophet of this lone aerial height,
Moveless it stands amid the splendor bright.
Now fades the purple from the dimming West,
The gold the crimson wreathing peak and crest,
The changing hues upon the snowy breast

Of these Sierras. Soundless grows the air,
Like barques, with sails of pearl, the clouds
Float on their seas illimitably fair,
To harbors that the coming Night enshrouds.
God's flowers—the stars—now one by one appear,
As twilight in deep beauty hovers near,
Like some sweet Angel hushing all to rest
As dies the last faint glimmer in the West!
Then from the brilliant orbs there seems to fall
A hush as if to prayer they summoned all
Of earth! And e'en these peaks seem bowed in prayer,
While moonlight bends in benediction there!
So thro' the night these awful caverns loom
Steeped in their vast impenetrable gloom!
Still, echoless, no sound of whirring wing,
Till Morn shall come, in grandeur of a king,
And plant upon these walls his standard bright
While fly the scattered legions of the Night!

Arizona—1904.

RAMONA

*I was an outcast, shunned by all!
By night I heard the wolf-pack call.*

Ramona

Beside the tepee's door she sat;
The murmur of the cataract
That leapt from rocky cleft to cleft
Was all the sound she heard. Bereft
Of all that life and love held dear,
A moment then she paused to hear
The accents of her little boy,
Playing beside her in his joy.
A bow and arrow held he there,
And little knew her heart's despair!
Her open arms she held to him
While tears her darksome eyes made dim,
And these words told her woe and care:
"Come close to me, my poor, lone boy,
My anguish, and my soul's dear joy!
Nay, look not in mine eyes with fear,
For the last time I clasp thee here!
I go where love knows not deceit,
Where only love is ever sweet—
The Father's! In that happy land
Beyond the stars. Oh, proud and grand

Thy father once held me to his breast,
And first these raven locks caressed,
It seems not many moons ago
The blissful mem'ry haunts me so !
My life is fading, as the day
That sinks in yonder clouds away ;
Soon comes the night ; alas, for me !
Another day I shall not see !
So let me quickly tell to you
My story, as yon heavens true !
Afar from here, 'neath torrid skies,
And peaks that to the stars arise ;
Where torrents like a whirlwind dash,
And sounds the thunder's awful crash ;
Where step of white man rarely trod,
The red man dwelt. He was my God—
That stranger who one day I found
Within the tepee, strongly bound,
Reserved for torture when the sun
That day its lurid course had run !
I had a heart that could endure
All pangs, and keep its purpose sure ;
An Indian maiden does not fear !

But there was something in those eyes
That gazed upon me, deep and clear—
Something my heart could not despise!
They seemed to say, ‘Oh, save me, girl!
And I will give my heart’s dear pearl—
Its tender love alone, to thee!’
My soul went out in sympathy.
Oh, God! that this the end must be!
I gave him one assuring glance,
And left the rest to time and chance;
For I could not the stranger leave
In misery to moan and grieve
Knowing that death his fate would be
Ere midnight fell o’er rock and tree!
I watched, and to the tepee crept,
While all the tribe in silence slept!
No sound except the night wind’s moan,
I stood before him there alone!
Unbound the thongs, and set him free!
Led him to where he safe would be
Oh, God! for white man’s treachery!
A pale face with a heart as black
As midnight! Boy, the time I lack

To tell thee how my heart was won,
And how I loved, thy parent, son !
My father was a chief, and stern,
And when he came the truth to learn
He died in grief—I left his side :
The Indian maiden was the bride
Of one to whom she gave her life—
Her life of Love, thro' ev'ry strife !
Days passed away ; we happy were
Within the City's whirl and stir ;
I lived but for his love alone,
He was the Sun that o'er me shone !
His was the smile that was a star
To guide me on to joy afar !
I never dreamed that untruth lay
Within his vile soul day by day !
I never thought he could forget
The life I saved him ! with regret
I saw his love fade as the star
That ushers in the dawn afar !
But thou hadst come to be my joy,
My ruddy, little joy-faced boy !
For thee I lived, his taunts I bore,

But from this heart his love I tore,
When for another he forsook
His wife; and boy, his life I took!
I tracked him with the steps of Fate—
Even an Indian squaw can hate!

* * * *

I was an outcast, shunned by all!
By night I heard the wolf-pack call;
But it was sweeter to my ear
Than heartless laughter, jibe and jeer
Heaped on a poor forsaken wife—
No home, no friend, no rest in life!
Oft I have paused upon the side
Of yonder canons yawning wide
And watched the thread of silver flow
Thousands of feet away below,
And thought to plunge within its breast
To find an end in dreamless rest!
But thou wert near: how could I leave
My boy, my pride, alone to grieve?
'Tis better as it is: I go
Beyond these peaks of living snow

Where the Great Spirit cares for all
However mean, however small !
For heeds He not a sparrow's fall ?

* * * *

Just now I placed within thy hand
The poisoned arrow of our band
And bade thee aim with childish glee
The bow-string held upon thy knee !
Kiss me ! One clasp ! to rest I go !
Weep not, my boy, thou couldst not know
That death lurked in the poisoned dart—
Thank God the arrow reached my heart !

* * * *

The night fell o'er her like a pall
While pitying stars looked on her there !
Once happy, young, unknown to care .
But now bereaved of life and all !
So passed she from the earth away,
Biding in peace God's judgment day !

MOANEE
A TALE OF THE FOOT-HILLS

*I tell this legend, as it was told
By the camp-fires in the times of old,
When the blue smoke rose above the pines,
In a thousand curling, weaving lines,
And the warriors of the plains, at peace,
To all their battles gave surcease.*

Moanee.

(A Tale of the Foot-Hills.)

Hark to this tale of the foot-hills lone—

This legend that lights the Western zone
With its glow of human kindness

That the savage heart, lothe to confess
Still shows, like gold hid in dull earth,
Which to the eye puts forth its mirth
After the passion-shock of storm

That rends the pine trees towering form.
Hark to the night-winds ! in their tones

Fancy may hear the parting moans
Of many a brave in days of old
Who reddened these arid, level sands,
As ancient legends have often told,
In the wild foray, where the savage bold
With his schemes of cunning manifold,

Oft led to battle his murderous bands.
Here are whitened bones that peep to-day
When the storm-wind sweeps the sands **away**.
Here are arrows that have sped their flight
In the horrible tumult of the fight ;
Yon grand, majestic cliff could tell

Of the wild and hideous savage yell,
Like a voice that came from the pits of hell!
And this canon's dim and vasty deeps
Where breathless silence ever keeps
Its lair, with awesome vigilance,
Could whisper of the fierce advance,
In war-paint hideous to view,
Of cruel hordes, here to imbue
Their hands in hated tribal blood
That flowed like a sunset-tinted flood
When the carnage of the strife began,
Not the panther in his mighty wrath
Prowled to destroy, on his midnight path,
With a more relentless, vengeful hate
Than the savage showed while he would wait,
Low-crouched, upon these level plains,
Once deeply dyed with gory stains.
For the coming of his treacherous foe
In the horrible days of the long ago!
Not a rattlesnake with its head erect,
And its coils with dark-hued scales bedecked,
Bore such malignance in its glance
As the savage eyes, keen as a lance,

Glared at the signs along the trail,
Which never he had known to fail,
That told him of the stealthy tread
Of the enemy he was taught to dread
By long hereditary spite,
In those terrible days of savage might !
So I tell the legend, as it was told
By the camp-fires in the times of old,
When the blue smoke rose above the pines,
In a thousand curling, waving lines,
And the warriors of the plains, at peace,
To all their battles gave surcease.

* * * *

Fairest of Indian maids—
Sprite of these emerald glades—
Was Moanée, whose sire
The Chieftain proud and brave,
Ne'er would to foeman crave—
Whose heart was raging fire !
Her step was like the fawn's
That glided at the dawn's
First light upon the hill !

Her hair, the raven's wing
That poised above the spring
That glistened 'mid the bloom !
Her eyes were dark of hue,
Bespeaking courage true,
And still untouched by gloom.
The child of Nature's choice,
Lovely, and mild of voice,
A maid beyond all fear ;
Joy of the Chieftain's heart,
Of his lone life a part
His comfort year by year.
She grew to womanhood,
This nymph of grove and wood,
The tribe's bright hope and joy ;
Woe to the blighting hand—
Death to the dastard band
Would Moanée destroy !

There was no deed too bold.
In those dark days of old
Nor punishment too dire
Of fiercest, torture-fire

To visit on his head
Who dared the might so dread
Of Moanée's proud sire!
He loved her with a passion tender,
To him she was his all in all;
Her thought was but of him; to render
A daughter's love whate'er might fall,
Tho' o'er him grew the clouds of sorrow,
Tho' tempests of defeat each morrow
Assailed him, she was ne'er denied.
Tho' her Life's joys were multiplied
For this red chief of all his race
Upon whose grand and stoic face
Love set its mark of haughty pride
In her—the daughter at his side!
In chase and battle she was near
The bow and arrow in her hands
Answered her spirit's swift commands;
And all the tribe her prowess knew,
Paying her queenly reverence due;
For was she not their Warrior Queen,
In savage womanhood serene,
The naiad of that desert scene?

But Love had come to the maiden's heart,
With all its sweetness and all its pain—
The keen delight and the bitter smart—
Its burst of starlight, its tears of rain!
She gave her soul to her sire-chief's foe
Brave Eagle-Wing, who in many a blow
Of fiercest conflict her sire defied.
She had promised to become his bride
When Autumn leaves had to crimson changed,
And the wildwood trail o'er which they ranged
Had its emerald glories turned to gold
In a wealth of beauties manifold.
But a rival warrior of her band
Had wooed her for her heart and hand—
Lone Wolf, who looked with a scowl of hate
On his enemy kindlier used by Fate;
Who was smiled upon by the maiden fair
Whom the tribe had guarded with tender care;
And for vengeance sought he early and late.
She had laughed his ardent vows to scorn,
All her sharp rebukes he had meekly borne,
But within his breast his smouldering ire
Lay buried, like the volcano's fire,

And he vowed to win her, his heart's desire!
But the Indian maiden arch, yet coy,
Went on her way in the bountiful joy
Of a Love that Heaven to her had sent—
In which each thread of Life's woof was blent!

The dawn was tinting peaks of snow
With its enamelled, roseate glow,
That flashed from rocky cleft and cave
To boundless deeps of gloom below,
And to the scene a grandeur gave,
As the glinting arrows of the sun
Glanced here and there, with light intense,
In a maze of wild magnificence!
The Western world from nest awoke,
And mists arose on high—
The great All Spirit to invoke—
Ascending, incense-like, unto the sky!
It was a Dawn, as yet, of Peace.
The mountain-torrents, as in play,
Tossed to the breeze their diamond spray;
And leaped along from steep to steep,
Sparkling in every crevice deep.

The birds poured forth a matin song
That rippled down the jubilant breeze,
And rang in joyous symphonies
The leafy groves along.

It was Dawn, as yet, of Life
All unembittered by the strife
Of foes in turbulent array,
As if to mock the glorious Day
New-born unto a teeming earth!
As if to turn to darkest dearth
Fair scenes with gladness rife!

Hark! with a horrible rush and a roar—
Boom of the surf on a storm-smitten shore—
Crash of the terrible avalanche-pour
Met mighty legions contending!
Faces that gleam with a fiendish delight,
War-painted; arrows in murderous flight,
Steeds that out-thundered in hoof-beating might
Tempests their fury expending!
Out of the hell of the battle that rages—
Like unto beasts just set free from their cages—
Eagle Wing singles out Lone Wolf, while he
Watches his rival.

The challenge is given,
While the blue firmament o'er them is riven
With yells that are momently stifled in Death!
And trampling of steeds that are crushing the breath
From foemen whose war-paint in mockery there
Mingles with gore in the sun's vivid glare!
On speed the rivals o'er the plain,
Until a space apart they gain
Far from the battle's deafening din;
Their prize—the maid, each strives to win!
The mountains tower on either side,
The river glistens deep and wide,
The pine trees look in lofty pride
Upon the warriors bold;
Alas! a moment later they see
Prone on the sands, in agony,
Eagle Wing whose death rattle sounds
Amid those silent, desert mounds!
His dying steed beside him lies,
O'er them the glaring, parching skies.
Lone Wolf looks on his rival's fate
With glances of malignant hate.
A haughty smile comes o'er his brow.

But, lo! with sweet compassion now
He from the saddle swiftly swings,
And running to the river brings
A draught of water for those lips
Deep-purpling in pale Death's eclipse!
He bids him drink in accents mild,
As he would speak unto a child.
“Moanée!” came the whisper low;
“Moanée! Love! from Life I go,
Bearing the sweetest thoughts of thee
Unto the happy hunting land;
By the Great Spirit thus set free!
Farewell! Farewell, forevermore!”
Then no sound the zephyrs onward bore.

Down from the zig-zag mountain trail,
Rushed the Indian maiden wild and pale,
With a horde of warriors following her
Over the dangerous rock-ribbed spur!
She is kneeling by her lover's side,
She is holding him unto her breast,
In the anguish of her soul's unrest!
Lone Wolf, pursued, made prisoner

And firmly bound they brought to her.
She cast on him a loathing look
Of deepest scorn.

“This in thy work!”

She cried, and from quiver took
Her keenest arrow.

“Shall there lurk
Within my heart one pitying thought
For him who has this foul deed wrought?
Die!”

“Stay your hand!” Lone Wolf replied,
“In gage of battle thus he died!
My life was free for him to take!
It was the chance of War that gave
Me life, and him the silent grave!
Not for your pity now I crave.
The Indian brave fears not to go
Where he has sent his conquered foe!
My heart relented ere had fled
The spirit of the noble dead
I brought wherewith to quench his thirst,
And back to life I would have nursed
Him for your sake, because your love

Is dearest to my heart—above
All thoughts of vengeance!"

'Mid her band,
The arrow dropped from out her hand.
"Loose him, and let him safely go!"
She said, "Were he the foulest foe
I could not, would not do him harm
For he was kind, his noble arm
Would soothe where he had laid the blow !
A father gone in this day's fight:
Oh, do I read your thoughts aright,
Brave band, and Chief he now shall be!"
Lone Wolf thanked her, on bended knee,
Kissing the hand she offered him
There in the twilight gathering dim.

Then the pine trees gazed on another scene
After the lapse of moons serene;
And the mountains seemed to hide their frown
Silently, solemnly peering down
On the festal dance and the songs of glee,
As Lone Wolf wedded fair Moanée!

THE OREGONIAN

*Why for Eastern delights should my restless heart sigh?
Here dwelleth all joys that the earth can supply.
In the open for me, is the heart's pure desire,
With a room for Content, and a sphere to Aspire!
On the trail, in the round up of cattle, I sing,
With the lariat unleashed, like a bird on the wing!
Here, alone, I am lord, in my freedom a king!*

The Oregonian

Under the skies of the infinite azure,
Under the silver of myriad stars ;
Nigh to the mountain's majestic embrasure,
Awful and grand with its abysmal scars ;
Here let me bide in my joyous contentment—
Here with the birds and the cattle that roam—
Owing the world not a tithe of resentment,
Over me God's multitudinous dome !

Long leagues of land in the blaze of the sunlight,
Stretching afar to the horizon's verge ;
Then, at the darkness, the soft gleam of one light—
Star of my cabin—while homeward 'I urge.

Here it is God's Land, and Heaven is nearer !
Dies all the petty contention of earth ;
Even the brooks and the flowers seem dearer
Bound to my heart my a far higher worth
Than all I find in the din of the rabble,
Crazed with its race for the gaining of gold,
Wild with the noise of its incessant babble—
Type of the heathenish Babel of old !

One with my soul is the rush of the torrent
Tearing its course down precipitant deeps !
Even the rattle of reptile abhorrent
Blends with the bird-song, and harmony keeps !
Room for the soul's broad expansion is 'round me,
Room for the sympathies tethered in town ;
Here can I break all the fetters that bound me,
Cast all society's heresies down !

Nature is mine with its beautiful sweetness—
Laughter of winds in the lightness of Spring ;
Glory of flow'rs in radiant completeness ;
Cañons and clefts where the wild echoes ring ;
Waterfalls gleaming with hues iridescent,
Swirling in thunderous vehemence by ;
Snow-peaks that lift to the moon's pearly crescent,
Piercing the blue of the luminous sky ;
Flight of the vulture that airily poises
Eager to sweep on its quarry afar ;
Insects that utter their petulant noises
Far better these to my heart than the jar
And turbulent warfare of wild crowded places
Knowing no God but the God of base gain !

Tricked by the glamour of deceiving faces,
Filled with the spectres of want and of pain !
Oh, for the rare fragrant breath of the prairie
Bearing the scent of the long waving grass !
Oh, for the bright plumed birds ! And the airy
Voice of the pines, and the rivers, like glass,
Sweeping majestical, silvery-winding,
Onward, still onward, and evermore finding
Gorgeous magnificence over them bending,
Gold of the sunlight and silver of starlight
Evermore blending and unto them lending
The power and grandeur that live not in Art
But only are born out of wild Nature's heart
Their beauty, their gladness, their rest to impart !

Mine be the serpent that slips thro' the sand,
With sinous sliding, and malignant glance ;
Mine be the cyclone fierce, mighty and grand,
For in its fury one has half a chance !
Give me the grizzly, tremendous of paw,
Rather the vulture, the sleek lizard's jaw—
Aye, rather these than the scandal and spite
The spleen and the jeer of the opulent crowd,

The way of the world that has made Mammon might,
And utters its sophistries blatant and loud!
At least I have rest from the long, hopeless quest
Of a love that can never—ah! never be mine!
There is rest in the rill, and the pines of the hill,
In the lone, brilliant stars, and the moon's placent shine!
There is peace in the sound of the wild waterfall
That bloweth its trumpet on storm-jagged steep
To summon the echoes of yon cañon's wall,
And, like tangled silver, then headlong to leap!
There is joy for the heart that can hope nevermore,
Forsaken by Love in the days passed away;
For Nature alone can its calmness restore,
And teach it to hold taunting Mem'ry at bay!

Why utter the story of one all untrue—
Of Love's tender vows in their holiness shattered?
The severance bitter, the scornful adieu,
The jewels of confidence thus rudely scattered!
I meet no rebuff in the elements near me;
The wild creatures slink from my pathway and fear me;
To me they are harmless, and bear me no scorn,
Fit comrades are they for hearts hopeless, forlorn!

Rich butterflies, like gaudy flowers awing,
Amid tangled vines gayly hover and swing;
Close hid, the panther crouched low on the branch
Waits but to fall, like a fierce avalanche!
Sunning itself in the bright, blinding glare
Of noontide the rattler lies coiled in the sand;
And songs of the birds on the bloom-scented air
I hear, like the echoes from far fairy-land!
The river my comrade is, restlessly flowing,
Onward, still onward, in broadening view,
Beauty and charm to the wildwoods bestowing,
Mirroring stars in their eloquent glowing,
Mirroring heaven translucently blue,
Lulling to quiet my heart in its passion,
Soothing its anguish, it still is a friend;
But, when the lash of the storm bids it dash on,
Sweeping its banks with a boundless unrest,
Bearing its rage and its hate in its breast,
Showing its fangs in the white of each crest,
Wild in its anger the forest to rend—
Then is my heart with its infinite yearning
One with the river, all passionate, spurning
Human control, with a deep inward burning,

Filled with a scorn that seems never to end!
Scorn of the love that was falser than human!
Scorn of the vows of a false-hearted woman!
Kinder the flame of the red lightning's stroke
Rending the heart of the huge forest oak!
Aye, far more merciful were the cyclone
Sweeping destruction o'er circle or zone,
Dashing its way with an uncontrolled ire,
Swift as the wings of a whirlwind-lashed fire;
Kinder, more merciful these than the love
Slighted and scorned; for the angels above
And the demons below must with pity condemn
The heart that would barter the rare, priceless gem
Of affection, so full of a richness untold—
Aye, barter it all for a handful of gold!
I wonder if now in that city afar,
The whirl of its crowds, and the tumult and jar,
Her heart hath forgotten the vows that we plighted?
The night at the porch by the stars dimly lighted?
The winds soft and low, and the roses asleep?
The nightingale trilling its cadences deep?
I see the rich hue of her cheeks all aglow;
I touch her warm hand, small, and white as the snow

That gleams to the stars on yon peaks far away;
And my heart reads the words that her eyes mutely
say!

Oh, the world then to me was a Paradise rare,
And she was its Eve in her loveliness fair!
But the serpent came early the joy to despoil,
The glamor of beauty to wither and soil,
And leave in its place but a heart-blighting care
To follow my life with its burden and toil!

One night—I had been on the trail since morn—
I was weary, dejected and sadly forlorn—
(Ere the sweet love of Nature was in my soul born,
And I'd learned its philosophy, tender, consoling,
The delicate harp-strings of life all controlling,
And blending in harmony discords of Time
In one peerless song, rare, ecstatic, sublime!)
I mused in my hammock; the night's deepening shade
Hung heavy o'er ravine and river and glade;
And, like the low rumble of hoofs on the plain,
I heard the deep thunder presaging the rain,
The pines wildly writhing like giants in pain!
A face, white with anger and terror, appeared—



The eyes glared upon me as if they still feared
A living resentment that would not be hushed!
The blood of a wound from her heart madly gushed!
'Twas she—and she reached out her hand to me there—
And said in a voice that was wild with despair:
"Forgive me! Forgive me! I cast Love away—
I saw all its roses in brightness decay,
And Life with me since has been bitter dismay!"

I strove to arise; but my limbs were like lead,
I tried hard to speak; but words none I said!
She knelt at my side pleading thro' blinding tears,
And told me the story of sad, loveless years.
But still I replied not, my tears would not flow;
I laughed at the words of her pitiful woe!
For had I not suffered, unpitied for years?
Could this be assuaged by a false woman's tears?
She clung to me there in her anguish supreme,
And, by the swift glare of the lightning's sharp gleam,
I saw a face pallid and deep-lined with pain—
(Oh, God! that I ever should see it again!)
She told me of long years of bitterness spent,
And begged that my heart would its anger relent;

She spoke of the days ere her promise was broken ;
She showed me a withered rose—Love's early token,
And pictured the Past and the beautiful years
With eloquent yearnings and passionate tears ;
The porch ; and the old trysting place in the dell ;
The lane, and the scenes that my heart knew so well ; . . .
Her fair Northern home with sweet woodbine em-
bowered,
Its garden, its meadows with daisies o'erflowered.
I saw, yes, and yonder the school on the hill !
I heard once again the harsh whir of the mill
Where as fair childish sweethearts we loitered to see
The dash of the waters that swept by in glee.
But what was her anguish, her pleading to me ?
For had I not suffered since that far-off day ?
And had not my current of Life turned away
From all joys it knew and their beauty and sweetness,
From Hope's lovely dream and its fruitful complete-
ness ?
And all for her sake and her false, wilful pride
That thrust me an outcast so far from her side,
And turned unto gall the sweet cup of pure love,
Yea, changed to fierce hate the content of the dove !

I spurned her, I say, with a strong man's fierce wrath!
I bade her begone—no more darken my path.
For the tempest without could not equal the might
Of that in my heart at her terrible sight,
And he thought of the life she had come but to blight!
With a crash that resounded from cavern to peak,
And a glare, as if risen from Hell's awful deeps—
(Or the red of a flame as in fury it sweeps
O'er the prairie)—she turned then to speak:
And I woke from the clutch of a horrible dream!
She had fled; and I saw in the last lurid gleam
The eyes of a serpent that crawled at my feet,
To me and my cabin companion more meet
Than the woman who vowed to be mine long ago,
But whose vows were as light as the sun-lighted snow
That melts into tears in the mild spring-time breeze;
Yea, as trustful as waves of the treacherous seas!
Then I saw the first glimmer of dawn in the skies
Rose-tinting the mountains that 'round me arise,
And purpling the caverns and pine-covered hills
And spreading its glories o'er rivers and rills,
Like the blessing of God on his handwork below
O'er the land that had nothing to do with Life's woe!

And I thanked Him for being, and strength to live on
For the grandeur of all these eyes rested upon!
For the nights of the keen orbs that spangled His
 throne,
For the deeps of the cañons reverberant, lone.
For the mountains that up, up in majesty rear
Till they pierce through the clouds to the luminous,
 clear,
Azure space far beyond; and the glitter and glow
Of the stars softly fall on their manes white with
 snow!

And I thanked Him again for the pathways I trod,
Where the human within me was kindred with God!
For what is the Orient o'er seas of blue
With the languor of palms dripping spice-laden dew—
Mosques and minarets stretching away to the skies,
And its blossoms and flowers of infinite dyes,
Or its maidens with night in their soft, melting eyes?
Have I not in the breath of the pines o'er my head
All the sweets, the delights ever Paradise shed?
And the lessons of mountains here lifting my soul,
With the language of rivers that ceaselessly roll,
Rushing onward and on to the far-away goal!

Why for Eastern delights should my restless heart
sigh?

Here dwelleth all joys that the earth can supply.
In the open for me is the heart's pure desire,
With a room for content, and a sphere to aspire!
On the trail, in the round up of cattle, I sing,
With the lariat unleashed, like a bird on the wing!
Here, alone, I am lord, in my freedom a King!
There is joy in the watch of the herd 'mid the night
When the stir of the wind sets them often in flight,
And the clash of the horns, and the billowy sweep
Of the dark, huddled throng echoes harshly and deep;
And I gallop along while my broncho I spur,
'Mid the wild ever-echoing tramping and whir
Till the leaders I head in precipitate flight—
There is joy in it all and a wondrous delight!
So why should I sigh for the dazzle and glare
Of the city, and all that most men deem so fair,
When I know 'tis a world of delusion and snare,
Of crime and pretense, and of scandal and wrong,
Where the soul is oft bartered for gold, and the poor
Have Misery's lot evermore to endure?
And why should I care for a love that is lost?

I have counted the gains of it all, and the cost!
I have known the deceit that can lurk in bright eyes,
The sting of false hearts I have learned to despise.
All is vanity there; but I breathe here the Truth
In broad Nature's domain of perennial youth!
There is pleasure for me in the green dewy blade,
In the trees and the flowers of valley and glade;
The deeps of the blue sky, and the songs of the birds;
Day's dawn; and the noontide of quivering heat,
And the sound of the heart-thrilling echoing beat
Of the steed as it rushes away o'er the plain.
Tho' often at night but the limitless sky
Is roof of the spot where I wearily lie,
I am happier far than if sheltered with pride
In a palace where Untruth and Envy abide
With its mates of Hypocrisy, Falseness and Wrong,
And the glamor of riches cast over the throng!
So mine be the mountains that climb to the stars,
The gulches, the cañons that carry the scars
Of the Ages deep-lined in their adamant breasts;
The peaks with the snow on their high-lifted crests,
The grandeur, the beauty, the sweet, boundless peace
That give to the spirit of sorrow surcease!

So live I : and when to my rest I shall go,
My grave be the prairie, where winds breathing low
Shall sing me a requiem tender and soft,
And yonder deep caverns that tower aloft
My monument be till the great Judgment day
When the earth and its wrongs have all passed away !

THE CLIMBER

*"Say no more!" the goatherd cried,
"Your siren darts fall pointless here.
I will go on, Ambition calls;
Tho' avalanches bar my way
I will go on!"*

The Climber

A wandering goatherd in the streets
Of far-off Alpine village stood,
And saw draw near a chariot
Of gold and crystal wondrous fair.
Upon it, lashing foam-white steeds
To frantic speed, the rider stood,
Uncaring for the multitude
Of throngs, all ages and all trades
And ways of Life.

There sat within,
On crimson velvet seat, a Maid
Of grace and beauty marvellous !
All eyes were turned, all hands were raised
Towards her now beseechingly,
And voices wild for favors plead.
Full many trampled were beneath
The prancing hoof-beats of the steeds,
Or crushed under the grinding wheels !
For sage divines ; the poor, the rich ;
The young, the man of four score years ;
The student, and professors wise—

All madly rushed towards the Maid,
With outstretched arms, to win her smiles !
But calmly sat she, with a face
Impassive as those mountain peaks,
With naught of recognition there,
Tho' the way was wet with blood and tears,
And strewn with myriad broken hearts !
The simple goatherd marvelled much
To see this Maid so passing fair.
Was she a Princess from afar ?
For the slaves of Toil a Joan of Arc ?
A Queen of Song to glad their hearts
And thrill ? Or fairy with rich gifts ?
He turned him to a veteran gray
All bent and worn and bullet-scarred
And him bespoke :

“Who is this Maid
Who rules all hearts with queenly sway ?”
His withered hand the veteran laid
Upon the goatherd’s arm, and said
With voice of treble, child-like tones :
“This is the Maid for whom the world
Doth sigh, and many perish still—

Have perished since the world began!
Old, young, weak, strong, humble and great,
Rich, sinner, priest, and potentate,
The fool, the sage her votaries are!
Happy, yet wretched is the life
Who basks within her witching smiles,
And on her passionate kisses feeds!
But once a year this way she comes
Bestowing favors on the few!"
E'en as he spake the chariot stopped,
The Maid alighted, and the throng
Fell back in awe—made opening wide
Of avenue, thro' which she passed.
Up to the startled goatherd she
All smiling, came, and straightway threw
Her arms about his sun-bronzed neck,
And pressed upon his trembling lips
Her burning kisses! Mad with joy,
He begged her never to depart,
But evermore his star to be
Amid the storms and ills of Life!
She whispered something to him then,
And, entering her chariot swift,

Sped on her way, amid the sighs
Of throngs of disappointed hearts!
Envied by all, the goatherd stood
And heard the shouts of bitter rage
That 'round him beat.

"To think," they cried
"That she hath showered favors on
This ragged toiler of the hills,
While many are far worthier here!"
But he heeded not the furious speech,
And taking up his daily task,
With hope renewed, he wandered on.
The birds to him sang carols sweet;
And flowers nodded on his path,
Scattering fragrance o'er his way
Yet in the midst of his delight
A shadow fell athwart his heart!
Oft in his toil he paused to brush
The sweat that gathered from his brow—
A string of sparkling, silver beads—
For he was musing of the one
Who sat within the chariot fair—
Her eyes, like brilliant stolen stars

Of Paradise! He felt again
Her maddened kisses thrill his blood
With fires of Love; those downy arms—
Soft pillows of the Seraphim!
Would that he might once more repose
Upon her bosom, and expire!
Then would he to his task repair,
While the hours crept by with feet of lead!
Anon he turned imploring eyes
To peaks against the steel blue dome,
That towered like vast, cathedral walls;
Like monuments of Gods of old!
Or like the fangs, in jagged row,
Of fabled monsters of the Past!
Or thoughts of Genius soaring high!
Or giants garbed in silver robes
With fringes of the eternal snow!
Wild torrents thundered deep below
With eloquence that fiercely poured
Thro' tunnels of the mountain's heart.
With gathered fury, leashed, in view
Crouched avalanches everywhere—
White dragons of fair Switzerland!

Great lakes that mirrored Alpine skies
And all their stars of sparkling rays—
The eyes of Angels! Swift cascades
Adown the craggy steps out-leapt,
With silvery feet, and dark green pines
Seemed armor-clad for battle dire
With ice-armed legions everywhere!
Deep glaciers gleamed in every pass;
And silver-arrowed rivers sped
Upon their flight!

Like emerald wreaths

The valleys twined around the scene,
And sounds of tinkling bells were heard
Floating on pinions of the air!

The chamois flashed across the sea;
And music of the huntsman's horn
Came to the ear of shepherd lone
Tending his flock of bleating sheep;
While the last rays of the dying sun
Tinted the floating clouds with lights
Of purple, rose and amber gold.

The land of Freedom—Switzerland—
Unrolled its beauty to his eyes!

Long gazed he on the marvellous realm.
These peaks seemed mighty problems high
Upon the varied paths of Life,
And beyond them he would, searching, find
The secret haunts of fair Romance!
Mayhap, the Chariot-Maid was there!
Would he attempt the heights to scale?
Perchance when he had bravely won
A foothold on their arduous side—
Conquered each obstacle, and reached
The highest peak, might he not find
An icy wilderness—no more—
Instead of trace of her he loved?

The sun poured down its store of gold;
It was a day of Alpine calm
And beauty. To his view there came
The shadow of a human form.
The stranger paused; upon his brow
Were waving locks of iron-gray
That fell on shoulders broadly made;
His lips were pale, and firm compressed;
His raven-black, and piercing eyes

Peered from their bushy eye-brows
On the goatherd who stood wondering nigh.
The iron hand of Time had left
Its marks upon the stranger's face,
Yet fire still blazed within those eyes,
As if of will unconquerable!

"Still dreaming, lad," he softly said
Of the world afar and its delights,
Of dazzling charms of one sweet maid?
Why should you climb? Nigh all the world
Is with you in your airy task!
Yours are but dreams, fair, idle dreams,
That melt, like rainbows in the sky!
When man meets me real Life begins,
For I have crossed the giddy heights,
And knowledge have of her you love!
I knew your secret—read your heart--
From the first moment that we met!
I know where you may find the Maid
If heart of yours is strong as steel!
I'll point the way that you must take--
I am the traveller of roads,

And know the best and surest paths.
Yet Pilgrims tremble when I'm near!
I build the gorges, giant-mouthing,
The dizzy precipices vast
That must be crossed ere one can gain
The glowing wreathlet of Success!
I plant the trees—the sharp-teethed rocks
On paths that otherwise were smooth.
Who conquers these his Life shall be
One dazzling dream of Fairyland!
The road that leads to the palace bright
Of the Maid you love is crowned with peaks
That pierce the realms of vapid clouds
Where Death doth lurk in every step!
Dare you attempt? If you succeed,
The Maid you love you then shall wed!
But should you fail, you must return
To Mother Earth—to nourish her—
In some new form of life to rise!"
The stranger spoke and disappeared.

"Be it so then!" the goatherd cried,
"I'll follow on the toilsome trail!"

I'll find the Maid I madly love!"
But in his brain what thoughts arose?
The Past—its hours of mystery—
The Future and its roseate Hopes—
The Present and its trials grim.

But mused he: "Thus are heroes made!
When here the battle's roar had ceased,
And the footsteps of the Legions vast
Of bold imperious Ceasar died
Away from grand Helvetia old,
At Rüth three from the Cantons met
And swore beneath these Alpine skies
To die in their dear Land's defence!
To burst the chains of Tyranny!
To drive the power of Austria
Hence, like the leaves before the blast!
These heroes were! Their names outshine
Like brilliant stars of Hope and Faith
To the weary Pilgrims of the earth!"
All day he strode still on; but now,
With quickened pace, his heart was thrilled
With sacred fire.

Lake Constance shone

Before his sight ; the moonbeams fell,
In dreamy silver, o'er its breast !
He bent to hear while whispering waves
Told of the mighty days of old
When forests which its strand adorned
Were peopled with the startled stag—
Were ringing with the Roman shouts !
But now his thoughts were not of these.
In reverie, far-off was he !
At Schaffhausen that quaint old town,
Set in the Twentieth Century's lap,
Of oriel windows, gables gray,
No rock nor barrier crossed his path.
But, to the South, the glittering towers
Of rugged mountains lifted high.
There lay the pathway to his goal—
There dwelt the Angel of his dreams !
Onward ! While clouds, like argent Isles,
Lay in the upper deep of blue.
Lake Wallenstadt slumbered within
Its rocky bed. Sudden he heard
The roar of conflict near at hand ;
And at the advancing host of Knights

A handful of brave shepherds hurled
Down giant rocks!

For hours the strife
Raged on. Like thunderbolts swift crashed
Huge boulders hurling instant death!

Those shepherds' valor conquered here!
And Knights of Gold were vanquished by
The muscles of the sons of Toil!

Still on he went, and down the vale
He saw an armored knight, with sword
Poised o'er a shepherd at his feet.

The goatherd rushed upon him there
With well aimed blow of oaken club
And dashed the knight to gory death!
He knelt to dress the shepherd's wounds,
Who cursed him that he killed the knight,
For said he: "Soon my soul would be
Within the Palace fair of Fame!"

Still, as he dressed the shepherd's wounds,
He murmured: "Will this be my Fate?"

'Twas but a vision of the Past!

Within the vale of Engadine
He stood, where mountain giants shone

In regal glory! Rivers flashed
Like steel swords, thro' the leafy trees.
The sun stood with its feet of gold
Upon the peaks, and cascades leapt,
And sang their roundelay of joy!
He peered adown amid the trees
Where mountains mirrored rugged heads
Upon Lake Maggiore's breast.
Where bright blue skies forever hang
O'er dreamy Lake Lugano while
The sun-kissed breath of Italy
Sweeps o'er its bosom.

Then he turned,
His heart with gloomy sadness bowed,
For seemed he lost, as in a maze!
Oh, for one star from out the Heaven
Of Thought to guide him to the shrine
Of yonder Goddess of his heart!
On! On! with face set to the North
He sped, and crossed a rugged hill;
Where the women, strangely beautiful,
Beckoned to him, by Zurich's Lake
And sought with siren voices to woo

Him to their arms!

With fond delight

He gazed upon enchanting charms,

And willed to throw him at their feet,

Forever there in bliss to be!

But, hark! the roar of battle rolled,

'Mid the roads of winds invisible,

Rushing in madness to his ears!

It called him to be present there!

It stirred his heart, and urged him on

To join the struggle, and he fled,

Waving the women his adieu!

At Sempach, in the narrow pass,

The tide of battle halted. Here

The heroic Swiss had humbled now

The flower of Austria's chivalry.

Like tigers watched they, either foe,

Gathering muscles for the fray—

Muscles of steel and adamant!

To Death or triumph now to haste.

The Swiss crouched in the narrow pass,

Like statues of Defiance!

The Austrians came,

Like massive waves !

'Twas there, and then,
A peasant hero boldly stood
Within the awful jaws of Death!
Then rushed he forward, gathering—
Within his breast the awful spears,
And perished at the foemen's feet;
Yet shook their lines, slow-wavering,
Until they all were put to flight!
Oh, glorious example thine,
Brave Arnold Von Winkelreid !
As the sun shone o'er this battlefield
The goatherd saw the Maid so fair—
Heart of his heart ! She placed a wreath
On Unter Walden's hero's brow !
And uttering a cry of joy
He rushed to meet her ; but she fled !
"At last !" cried he, "the road I see !
Foot-sore and weary tho' I plod,
I near the goal of heart's desire!"
Still toiling on, a maids he met
Envolved in a robe of charms.
She was indeed a vision bright !

She sang rare songs of beauty sweet,
With voice that thrilled, like magic, thro'
His soul. His heart was soon ensnared
In the web of melody she wove!
"Madman!" she cried, "no further go!
Here ever pause 'mid glittering joys,
Tempt Fate no more! Your mission vain
Is known to me. Ambition's road
Is strewn with bleeding, broken hearts!
Tho' thousands perish, still they come!
Ah, few indeed who reach the goal!
Fleeting the smiles of her you seek,
Elusive as the lightning's flash!
And even if you do succeed
And reach her palace—even then
The struggle is but just begun—
'Tis vain to hold your footing there!
Turn, turn aside, nor sap your strength!
The brilliant mirror of your dreams
I'll shatter. Come, and follow me!
I'll lead you to a haunt among
The crystal hills, where snow-white doves
And robins coo and warble sweet

The happy songs of radiant dreams !
On balmy nights we two can sit
On a rustic bench, by a silvery brook,
And drink in the music of dear Love !
Where never worldling's sigh can come.
From gardens of delight I'll cull
The brightest flowers for you alone !”
“Oh ! say no more !” the goatherd cried,
“Your siren darts falls pointless here.
I will go on, Ambition calls ;
Tho' avalanches bar my way
I will go on ! The flowers of Love
And Beauty which you offer me
Will fade before the morrow's sun !
Already they in throes of Death !
How could I wear them on my breast,
Where Life throbs warm and fast ?

’Twere best

To leave them in the garden fair
With their companions ; sacred they
Even as our lives sacred are !”
He turned ; his journey to resume ;
The battle won, renewed was he

In strength and vigor of the heart
Where the glorious Staubbach tumbles down
O'er wildest crags, in silvery showers,
All fringed with people, green and gold,
Where liquid, blazing diamonds gleam,
All bruised and torn he wandered on.
He stretched his trembling, bleeding hands
And plucked a brilliant gem from out
St. Gothard's crown, at peril dear
Of his whole life! The first of gems
That he had found since he set out!
Oh, what a treasure 'twas to him!
For hours he gazed and gloated there
On the seraphic fires of its soul!
He heard its melodious murmuring:
"Oh, Paradise and all its joys
Are dwelling here within this gem!"
The lordly Rhine was at his feet,
And following, like fiery youth,
It rushed by huts and hamlets, till
'Twas lost among the city's walls,
Leaving him with his reveries.

He saw armed Knights of Tyranny,
Who bowed the hearts of men to dust !
And soon they melted far away,
Like dew before the morning sun.
For a terrific storm arose.
And when it ceased, the sunshine burst
Thro' the roof of clouds, a waterfall
Of gold ; and lo ! brave William Tell
Stood o'er the dying Gessler there
And Liberty was glorified,
And Tyranny was dashed to earth !

And still the goatherd wandered on,
With bleeding feet and weary heart,
Where the silver crowned Alps uprose,
By emerald pastures, countless flocks,
And sun-kissed landscapes 'neath the blue.
He stopped to rest beside Lausanne
Where walked the Kings of earth, and where
Lived monarchs of the world of Thought—
Voltaire and Gibbon and Rousseau !
He struggled by the mighty Rhone
That like an arrow rushes thro'

This wonderland of Nature's realm,
Past glaciers and mountains huge, ,
Past great St. Bernard, where the hosts
Of grand Napoleon looked down!
Mont Blanc, the goatherd gazed upon,
Its glittering helmet towering high
Above its army of giants near!
“So will I tower!” the climber cried,
“Above the burdens that I bear!”
Bleeding and bruised, still on and on
He struggled o'er the toilsome path,
And then he saw hundreds of skulls
About him strewn, and from a cave,
A giant came who bore a shield.
There was one path which onward led
Beside the giant's horrid den.
Towards the enemy he came
No thought of fear in his brave soul.
The giant's name was Ignorance;
A gem flashed on his mighty breast.
The goatherd willed it to possess
This gem at any cost! His sword.
He drew as he advanced. The fight

For hours raged with furious might.
But 'neath the giant's cruel blows
The goatherd, fainting, gasping, fell!

The earth, the mountains and the sky
All whirling seemed; the torrents roared
Within his ears!

He looked up then
And saw the soft sky bending o'er;
While stood the giant near his den.
By the fallen sat a blue-eyed maid
With a winning smile and wooing voice,
Who pleaded his sad wounds to dress.
"No!" cried he. "This would comfort bring,
And sweet repose; but I was born
For trials and for battle-strife!"
Slowly he rose unto his feet,
With sword in hand. The maiden turned
Aside and wept. The giant quick
The fight renewed with fury dire;
But soon the unequal combat ends;
The strength of Desperation drove
The goatherd's sword within the heart

Of that fell monster to the hilt,
And the goatherd tore the precious gem
From the gory, cleft and quivering breast!

"At last! At last!" the goatherd cried,
"I am upon the right road now!"
Emerging from his shelter, he
Exposed was to the golden glare
Of sunlight, and grew faint and wan.
Two maids of beauty came to him.
"Pilgrim," they said, "your days are few,
For time, the sculptor, has upon
Your brow carved wrinkles. You are old,
Your hair is white, your eyes are dimmed,
And worn and bent, you cannot live
In this fierce light that on you shines!
Unto the gardens fair of Peace,
Pleasure and Comfort come with us!
Enjoy the hours that yet remain."
He yielded, too weak to resist;
And slowly they led him away.
Then thro' the garden's open gates
He saw the marble fountains play,

With many tinted waters rich.
Couches of velvet and of gold
On which the forms of maids reclined
Were near; sweet music stole upon
The perfumed air; rare flowers bloomed
Intoxicating with their scent.
“Surely,” said he, “ ‘tis Paradise!
Here will I rest in happiness
Forevermore!”

But as he paused,
About to enter this domain,
A feeling strange rushed thro’ his heart,
The counterpart of what he felt
When kissed by his fair chariot Maid!
The fires of courage and of strength
That feeling strange again renewed.
With a wild cry he cast aside
The lovely sylphs, and turned away,
Toiling still up the mountain’s side!
Below him echoed far and wide
The terror-stricken cry that rose:
“No further, weary Pilgrim go!
Beware the crashing avalanche!”

At last his feet had gained the top
Of highest mountains, and he paused
To rest, for he was sore opprest.
Alas! the air was hard to breathe,
And fiercest vultures hovered 'round!
So hot the glare of noonday sun
He longed to be in pastures mild
Among the flock he dearly loved!

As he turned to view the scene around
A vision burst upon his sight.
To him it looked a picture bright
Torn from the walls of Eden's sphere!
A palace built of sapphires rare
And rubies—'twas the dome of Fame!
“At last! at last!” he wildly cried,
“The goal is near for which I've toiled!
Within the arms of her I love,
Yes, madly love, I soon shall rest!”
Sweet, silver bells rang from the towers,
And long processions sought its doors.
As he approached, chains rattled loud;
The swinging draw-bridge lifted was;

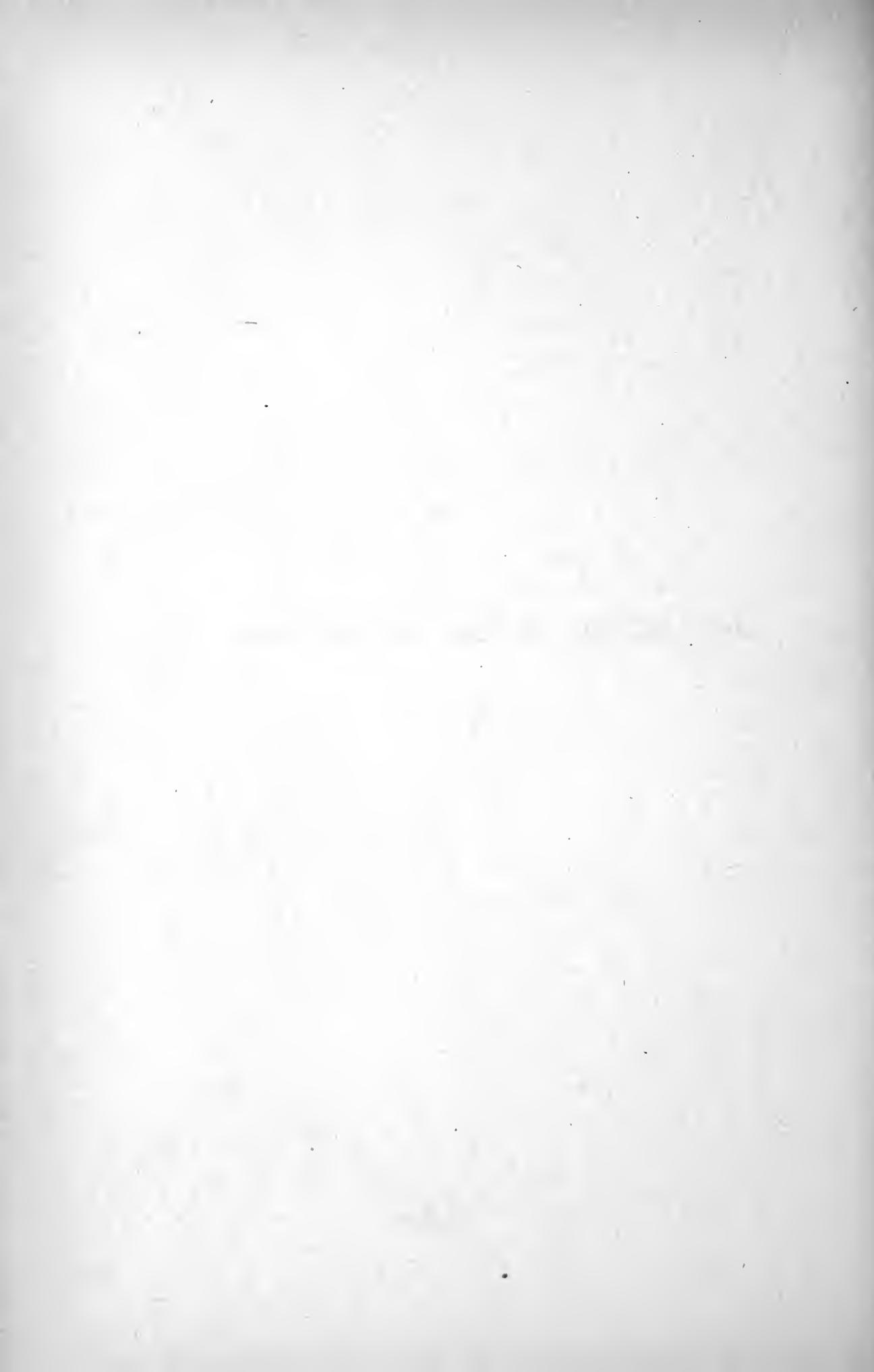
The Warder of the towers cried out:
“Too late! the Maid you seek is Fame!
She’s wedded to a friend of yours—
The butcher’s son of far-off Bern!”

The goatherd staggered to a rest
On rustic bench. His breath and blood
Seemed leaving him at this fell blow!
“The butcher’s son,” he laughed aloud,
That good-for-nothing, drunken elf!
The scorn and jeer of all the town!”
Thus he bemoaned his hapless lot,
His breath and soul melting away.

The Warder spoke: “Some travellers find
The journey easy, while some toil
And in a Life ne’er reach their goal!
Fame is as fickle as the flash
Of lightning, tho’ it shines on all
It strikes but few, and those few die
In the golden tangles of its web!
Far better ’tis to lowly live,
Like humble beasts, in pastures green,
Than be a strong man seeking Fame!

For when the eyelids of the day
Are closed, the beasts to slumber go,
And have no dreams till day arise.
What care they for the busy world?
Better to be like these than sigh
For bubbles of the Goddess Fame!
Frail as fair lies on Beauty's lips!
Where is thy gain? Return! Return!
Oh, stranger, downcast, turn they steps!
Go! be a beacon 'mid the dark
For Folly to take warning by!"
The goatherd sank in mute despair,
Then plunged him from the mountain's side!
A poor, dwarfed fir-tree stayed his fall,
And held him in its rugged arms.
For hours he lay in its embrace,
Then, strength returned, he started up
The mountain's path defiantly,
Determined not to know defeat!
Hark! what mighty sound was heard?
A roar, like thunder, shook the air!
Oh, horror! it was the avalanche
The white dragon of Switzerland!

Adown the mountain's side it rushed,
While the air was filled with broken trees,
And wayside cabins, and huge rocks.
Ah! what its fury could withstand?
No army would dare cross its path!
Down, down, it came, and to his death
It hurled the goatherd in its icy arms!
While far above the vulture sailed
In glee; and a million tiny suns
Were gleaming in the Alpine sky!



THE LEGEND OF THE ARGENTINE

*A carven arrow's head once bore
This legend of the days of yore,
From wide-spread pampas to my door;
So, hear me tell it.*

The Legend of the Argentine

A carven arrow's head once bore
This legend of the days of yore,
From wide-spread pampas to my door;
So, hear me tell it.

Long buried was this arrow's head
Where reaches of deep green outspread,
Beneath a turquoise sky, so fair,
That paradise seemed mirrored there,
Stretched to the Andes far away:
This tale of Love it breathes to-day,
And what befell it.

Ere the white man's conquering horde
Trod those pampas wild and broad;
When the condor's mighty wings
Swept these mountain openings,
Poising over caverns vast
On which never had been cast
Eye of mortal; ere these caves
Had become the silent graves
Of the dwellers of the rocks

Cleft and crumbling with the shocks
Of the tempest and the storm
Hurled when loomed the earthquake's form,
Shattering with giant hands
These primeval mountain lands,
Delving awful deeps where Fear
Ever since has hovered near—
Ere this time a savage race
Made these plains a dwelling place.
Strong of limb, bronze-brown of hue,
Valiant, and of purpose true;
In the chase of eagle flight,
Brave and crafty in the fight;
Bold of heart, to fear a stranger,
Morn would see the savage ranger
Speeding o'er the plains in battle,
With a foeman's ire aglow,
Nerved on by the war-drum's rattle,
Armed and eager for the foe!
Noon, beneath the palms o'erspreading,
Shade and sweet contentment shedding,
Saw the maidens coyly gathered
In a circle bright and fair,

With their garments gaily feathered—
Plumage varied, rich and rare.
Ah, for lovers then they waited,
Hastening from battle dire!
On their prowess contemplated,
Eager for their heart's desire!
Twilight, with its purple wings,
Over them made shadows deep:
Where the tangled foliage swung,
And the vine in clusters clung,
Nature wooed to tranquil sleep
Pampas, hill and wooded steep.
Then crept stealthily from lair
Beasts that shunned the daylight fair.
Slid the lizard thro' the leaves,
Where the noisome spider weaves;
Twined the snake on dewy trees
Motionless on moonlit leas.
From his huge and horrid den
Strode the fierce gorilla then,
Making hideous with his cry
Every region 'neath the sky
That his lungs of brass could reach

With reverberated screech!
While the cougar, from the limb,
Crouched, and darted on the dim
Covert of the Night, his stare
From two eyes with rage a-glare!
Yet from the forest and the plain,
And from the Andes to the main,
Along the Orinoco's sweep
There spread no terror half so deep,
No fear like that this monster brought
Thro' deeds of cruel vengeance wrought
On those who ventured on his path
And met the demons of his wrath!
Half man, half devil! horror vile!
No Caliban from Fancy's Isle
So fierce, so unrelenting, foul,
As he that bore the hideous scowl
Of a malignant, deathless hate
T'wards all God's creatures animate!

* * * *

Brave was the Chief in the pride of his youth,
Child of a sire who had long passed away;

Fair was the maiden in whose eyes the truth
Shone as the dew on the lilies of May !
Sweet was the love that was plighted at eve
Under the stars that were clustering bright ;
Lone was the heart that was destined to grieve,
Steeped in the darkness of Misery's night !
Often they wandered beside the clear stream,
Often it listened to vows that they told ;
Love held their souls in its beautiful dream—
Love that in spite of Time never grows old !
He was her pride for his valor and fame ;
She was his idol of grace past compare ;
Joy of his heart, like a spirit she came
Bringing to him all things lovely and fair !
Soon were their lives to be wedded with joy,
Like mountain torrents that meet on the plain !
Joined with a passion that naught could destroy—
Fraught not with shadows of sorrow or pain.
Nature's sweet children they were, in its prime,
Free and untrammeled by Fashion or Art ;
Love knows no season, and Love knows no Time ;
Their's was the pure, virgin bond of the heart !



"Oméné, dearest," spoke her love
"Take from my lips these gifts above
See those the false and fickle claim—
My kisses! Give me back the same!"
Ah! beautiful she lingered there
Framed in her wealth of raven hair
That in the moonlight shone as fair
And glossy in its splendor
As did those orbs of midnight hue
That uttered, mutely, answers true
To words of love so tender!
"Good-night, Oméné, now we part
But for awhile; yet in my heart
I keep thee as a flow'r that blooms
Amid some far-off desert glooms,
So sweet, so rare thou'llt ever be,
Dear Indian maiden, unto me!"
They parted in the silver gleam
Of moonlight; each to fondly dream
Of bliss that was for them in store:
They parted—to meet nevermore!
In dreams, the maiden's raptured gaze,
Soft-lighted by Love's ardent rays,

Beheld the Future's radiance shine
In rapture that was all divine!
In dreams, she held her lover's hand
Threading the groves of fairy-land!
The angels sang to soft repose
Her heart, as breezes lull the rose
Of twilight to its gentle sleep,
So calm, so restful, and so deep!

* * * *

With stealthy stride from out the wood
Who glides in wrathful solitude?
The fierce gorilla nears the tent,
Now straight he glides, now lowly bent,
Glares 'round him with a cunning leer!
Oh, maiden, quaileth not with fear
Thy gentle heart, e'en in thy dreams,
As onward fall the baleful gleams
Of those fell eyes where lights of hell
Blaze in their flames unquenchable?
One scream of wild and lone despair
Cleaves like a knife the torrid air!
Then, in his arms, with mighty stride

He bears the maiden far away
While gleam the skies with tints of day,
And fall the shrieks of wild dismay!

* * * *

On, on, like a torrent in turbulent might,
The sons of the forest spur after in flight!
With heart all aflame rides the chief at their head,
To rescue the maiden tho' living or dead!
Past tangle of vines, over river and hill,
By valley and wood, over cascade and rill,
In gorge and ravine, till the desert afar
Shines on their gaze, like the gleam of a star!
By night and by day o'er the desert they speed,
It bears not a leaf, no, not even a weed!
But yonder, afar on its ultimate verge,
There blooms an oasis! Still onward they urge
Their fast failing steeds on the gorilla's track,
No ardor they lose and no courage they lack;
They care not for hunger, they heed not the thirst,
For fierce the revenge that their maddened hearts nursed.

Day follows day; thy journey on,
Until their hope has well nigh gone!
No food, no water anywhere,
Nothing but one all-blinding glare
Of sun! Steeds drop on every side
Their forms bestrew the desert wide
To gorge the buzzards of the air
That hover o'er their pathway there!
With sun-baked lips, the riders lie
Beside their panting steeds to die.
They talk of rivers gushing free,
Of fountains in the desert sand;
Of brooks that purl in melody;
But *Death* lurks there on every hand!
Pale, quivering forms cry for one drop
Of water; but the rest ne'er stop—
They follow where the chieftain leads
Who little all the anguish heeds!
One thought is his in pain and death—
To rescue her ere his last breath!
They mark his tracks upon the sand—
That monster's—and the lessening band
Still staggers on! He looms in sight—

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Seems laughing at their hapless plight!
The maiden in his arms he holds
His mighty clutch her throat enfolds!

* * * *

From crag to crag leaping, still upward he flies,
The fierce fire of Hell in his terrible eyes,
He laughs his pursuers to scorn as he bears
His fair burden on to the dim mountain lairs
Of the cougar and jaguar, o'er crevice and cleft,
With the might of a giant of pity bereft!
Up, up, till he reaches the furthermost edge
Of the precipice, piercing the clouds, like a wedge,
Till clearly in view of the young chief he stands,
And holds o'er the deep yawning gulf in his hands
The maiden!

With horror and hopeless despair,
The chief presses on, in his heart a wild prayer
That the gods of his tribe will lend succor and aid,
And safely restore to him yon helpless maid.

* * * *

"Hold! Horrid monster! Curse thy hand!"
He cries, while mockingly doth stand
The creature of his vengeful hate!
The arrow of the chief too late
Wings from its leash! Down caverns vast
The maiden with a shriek is cast,
Just as the fatal poisoned dart
Is fleshed within the man-ape's heart!

* * * *

Years afterwards her grave they made
Where the wild flowers gem the glade;
And where the bright-winged birds flit by,
Singing their songs to earth and sky.
Beside her lies the chief whose love
Was more to her than Heaven above!
Long, long, the tribe this legend told
Of those dark, savage days of old—
Of valor bright, of Love so true,
As I have told it unto you.

(A Twentieth Century Ditty.)

How lightly thro' the air we whiz!

That's New York, just below;
This keen wind cuts a fellow's phiz.

I'll close the window so.

"Fares please!" Conductor, tell me when
We come in sight of Mars,
If I'm asleep, just wake me then;
My! what a lot of stars!

How smartly we are steered aside,
I really thought we should collide.

Thank goodness, I've a cozy seat,
I can't hang on to straps!
How strange the faces that we meet
Hindoos, Chinese and Japs,
French, German, Russian, all the rest
Are congregated here;

This line's considered far the best,
And fares are not so dear.

No! I don't stop at Timbuctoo.
Conductor, I am going thro'!

That white streak over there, my friend!
Why, that's the Chilkoot Pass.
You'll view it better at this end.
Here, take my opera glass.
And there's the Pole! The Yankee flag
Is waving o'er it, see!
As likewise over every crag
In this vicinity!
What, Paris? I'll land there all right,
I want to reach New York to-night!

The strongest fort in the whole wide world;
Shall I tell you where it stands?
'Tis not where flags are proudly unfurled
In this or in foreign lands.

Nay, not where the walls are thick and high,
Where the cannons are frowning down,
Nor yet where the troops are standing by
To defend their walled-up town.

But down in your midst where battles rage—
Rage on from the morn till night,
It has stood the test from age to age,
And never gave up the fight.

No poet has ever sung in its praise,
No hist'ry given it thought,
Yet faithful it stood through all the days,
And bravely the battles fought.

Shall the riddle be read by some brave herald?
Shall the curtains be drawn apart?
Lo! the strongest fort in the whole wide world
You'll find in a true woman's heart.

Oh, heart of brave humanity,
How art thou stirred to-day!
There is a sound of kindly glee
That meets thee on the way.
Thy pulses throb with happiness
For, lo! the star that shines to bless!
The Angels' choral symphonies
Blend now with earthly harmonies,
In heavenly rhyme
At Christmas time!

Back thro' the vista of the years,
See yonder manger low,
Beneath its wall the Babe appears
With face of wond'rous glow!
The majesty of innocence
That brings to earth a recompence
For all the sorrow and the gloom,
And bids sweet Hope again to bloom,
With peace sublime
At Christmas time!

Ring out to earth ye happy bells
Above the mantling snow !
What joy each sound of yours compels
While beam the high and low !
With peace on earth, and kindness still,
Re-echo over vale and hill !
He comes, the Holy Babe of Peace
With glory that shall never cease !
Speed on, each chime,
At Christmas time !

The world is crowned with heavenly light,
In grasp of kindly hand ;
In smiles of beauty die all spite
And scorn throughout the land !
New life is wakening ; and cheer
Is throbbing in the heart so drear !
The radiant Babe has tenderly
Brought joy untold to you and me !
Ring out, sweet chime,
At Christmas time !

A song for bleak December days,

Tho' not a song is left,

For birds have gone,

And woods are lone,

Of all their joys bereft.

But what of that, if in the heart

The Summer birds remain?

We'll still be gay,

And laugh away

The bleak December's reign!

A shout for wild December days,

Tho' falls the snow and sleet;

Who heeds the storm,

While hearts are warm,

And smiles are bright and sweet?

We've had the lovely Summer leaves,

The sunshine and the dew;

We'll have them still,

Old friend, we will—

December days are few!

A cheer for dark December days
For bring they not to all
The brightest hour
Of Heaven's dower
That may to mortals fall?
Oh, days of rare, old Yue-tide joy
The sweetest of the year.
That's why we sing
Your welcoming
December days so dear!

Zig-zag branches traced against
A dreary ashen sky ;
A filmy drapery of snow,
And winds that hurry by.
Oh, dark midwinter days, ye hang
A pall on all around,
But underneath the deepest snow
The sweetest buds are found !

Icicles that, dagger-like,
Hang from the farm-house eaves ;
A monotone of weariness
The howling tempest weaves.
Oh, sad midwinter days, the heart,
Like you, hath lack of cheer ;
And yet, amid the leafless trees,
The chirp of birds I hear !

Dales and hills that stretch afar,
A wilderness of white !
The silent brook that gleams like steel,
Once silvery delight.

Oh, wild midwinter, haste away,
On swift and darksome wing;
Tho' hopeful hearts in thee can hail
The prophesy of Spring!

They lie before me here,
Indeed they look like toys—
So small they seem—yet dead
To me the many joys
That in my heart revive
At sight of these wee mates;
Once it seemed paradise
To put on Nelly's skates!

I see the same gay throng
Swift gliding here and there;
I hear the low-hummed song
That fills the icy air;
What was the world to me
With all its loves and hates?
When bending on my knees
I put on Nelly's skates!

Ah, me! 'Tis years ago!
And, Nelly, where is she?
No wedded joys I know,
Life seems a farce to me!
The longer tho' I live
The more love contemplates;
What wouldn't I now give
To put on Nelly's skates!

SPRING

(*In Colorado.*)

Robins in the tree-tops,
 Deeps of turquoise sky ;
All the leaves a-waking—
 Laughing, low and high !
Crowds of snowy daisies
 Twinkling far and near ;
Oh, the joy of daisy-time,
 Sweetest of the year !

Silver rills that tinkle
 'Mid the grasses green ;
Not a cloud that hovers
 Earth and sky between ;
Crickets blithely chirping
 Welcome in with cheer—
Daisy-time, sweet daisy-time,
 Fairest of the year !

Far away the hill-tops
In the purple mist
Gleam a brilliant welcome—
Gold and amethyst;
Thrills the world with gladness
After sadness drear;
Who could sigh in daisy-time,
Brightest of the year?

Colorado—1904

A SONNET

(*Midsummer in Santa Barbara.*)

A miser I would be to-day and hoard
These treasures that I may not clasp again;
This flood of gold that drowns upland and plain,
This billowy bloom that stretches deep and broad;
The river, dwindling far—a silver cord—
And dappled shadows, down this cool, mossed lane
Whose mirrored boughs the lucent brooklet stain
With carven jet; these carols now outpoured—
Melodious rain—among the listening leaves.
Oh, benison of boundless, cloudless sky!
Mine, now, howe'er your sweets may glide away,
Mine, to delight the while white Winter grieves,
To dream of when keen drifts go whirling by.
Can aught to come steal joys I hoard to-day?

Santa Barbara—1904.

OCTOBER

Golden, brown and crimson leaves,
Falling, falling everywhere;
Ranks of amber tinted sheaves
Nodding in the hazy air.
And it's hey for blithe October,
Tho' the skies are dull and sober,
And the air is chill,
Yet we love thee still,
Oh, rare and blithe October!
Here and there, in russet rain,
Fall the chestnuts from the tree;
"Bob White" softly calls again,
Leaves are dancing in the breeze.
There's a joy, tho' flow'rs have faded,
And the sky and storm is shaded,
For the dreamy days,
Down these woodland ways,
Are sweet in blithe October!

Far off hills, in purple sheen,
Glow, like lights from fairyland;
Vales are clothed in golden green,
Earth seems now a pageant grand!
Tho' the joyful Year is fleeting,
And belated birds repeating
 Sad and long, "Good-bye,"
Where's the heart would sigh,
In rare and blithe October?

On the Santa Fe—1904.

MIDWINTER

(Wyoming.)

A wind that moans o'er lifeless plains
That wear a snowy shroud;
From leafless trees, when sunset wanes,
No song-bird carols loud
Its sweet Good-night; all Nature seems
As hushed as Death, while far,
Amid the dying daylight beams
There shines no welcome star,
In sad midwinter!

All silent where from branches high
Keen icicles, like spears,
Hang 'neath a bleak and ashen sky!
And yet this thought still cheers:
Oh, heart, amid the palling dearth,
The overwhelming gloom,
Beneath this snow-white shroud of earth,
Sweet roses bide their bloom
Thro' lone midwinter!

Wyoming—1904.

How I love to watch the steamboat,
As it skims the silv'ry lake,
In the glorious golden sunshine
When the morn is just awake;
And the smoke its sable ringlets
Wave around its handsome back,
While it speeds along the wat'ry ground
It leaves a silv'ry track.

The men who ride this matchless steed,
That plows the raging deep,
Are lost in wonder, love and fear,
As along the waves they sweep.
They watch the golden flowers above
That bloom in the fields of blue,
And dream of the loving ones at home
With loving thoughts most true.

O ! the music of its whistle!
Its throat so sharp and shrill!
As it echoes o'er the bounding waves
It makes my heart just thrill!
For I love this steed of matchless speed,
This steed of the waters blue,
That dashes along the hilly ground
With feet that are most true.

Good-by, sweetheart,
For we must part;
Those bitter words are filled with pain.
I did not dream,
That life would seem
So cold to me, and all in vain.
My days were bright,
No gloomy night
Until he came,
His bride to claim;
The happy past
Aside is cast,
For I must say good-by, sweetheart.

One parting kiss
I beg for this!
And though I go, I love you yet.
This last good-by
Brings forth a sigh,
And my poor heart throbs with regret.

Think once again
What might have been,
Had fate been kind
And love not blind,
And that will be
Enough for me—
I'll ask no more—good-by, sweetheart.

Oh, bells that ring out joyfully,
Awake the hills and vales
To glories that our eyes may see,
Bring fragrance to the gales
Ring out all sadness from the heart,
Bid mirth with us abide,
And cause the gloomy shades depart,
Oh, bells of Easter-tide.

Oh, skies of blue, ye seem to lean
More near to waking dells,
And fields and mountains, glad each scene
With rapture, Easter bells
Ah, lonely hearts await your call,
The message, far and wide,
Bear jubilantly unto all
That wait, fair Easter-Tide.

Join rills in glorious refrain,
Sing birds on merry wing;
Oh, trouble of the silver rain,
What gladness do ye bring.

The emeralds of springing leaves
The winters' ruin hide;
God's love to every soul that grieves,
Oh, speak, sweet Easter-Tide.

I miss thee when the morn awakes,
And all the birds sing out thy name,
I miss thee by the rippling brook,
Where first I sought thy love to claim ;
I miss the music of thy voice,
That spoke to me of love divine,
And feel as if my heart would break,
For I can never call thee mine.

I miss thee where we walked so gay,
Beneath the cloudless summer sky,
And told our loves so dear and true,
Before we parted—thou and I ;
I miss thee when the twilight falls,
'Tis then I long to have thee near,
I know no life without thy love,
'Twas bliss alone when thou wert here.

In the sleigh together,
He and she;
Lovely wintry weather,
Happy he.
Round her waist, so cosy,
One arm free;
Cheeks are blushing rosy
As can be!

This, while jogging slowly
On their way,
. Thro' the valley lowly,
Light and gay.
Soon the air is tingling
Fast they speed;
Reins, while bells are jingling,
Both hands need!

Little maid demurely,
Simply sighs,
Muffled up securely ;
Witching eyes.
Speeding down the high hill,
Speech she gains :
“Dearest, rest, and I will
Hold the reins !”



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